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American Medicine Confronts Multicultural America

BY SHERWIN B. NULAND

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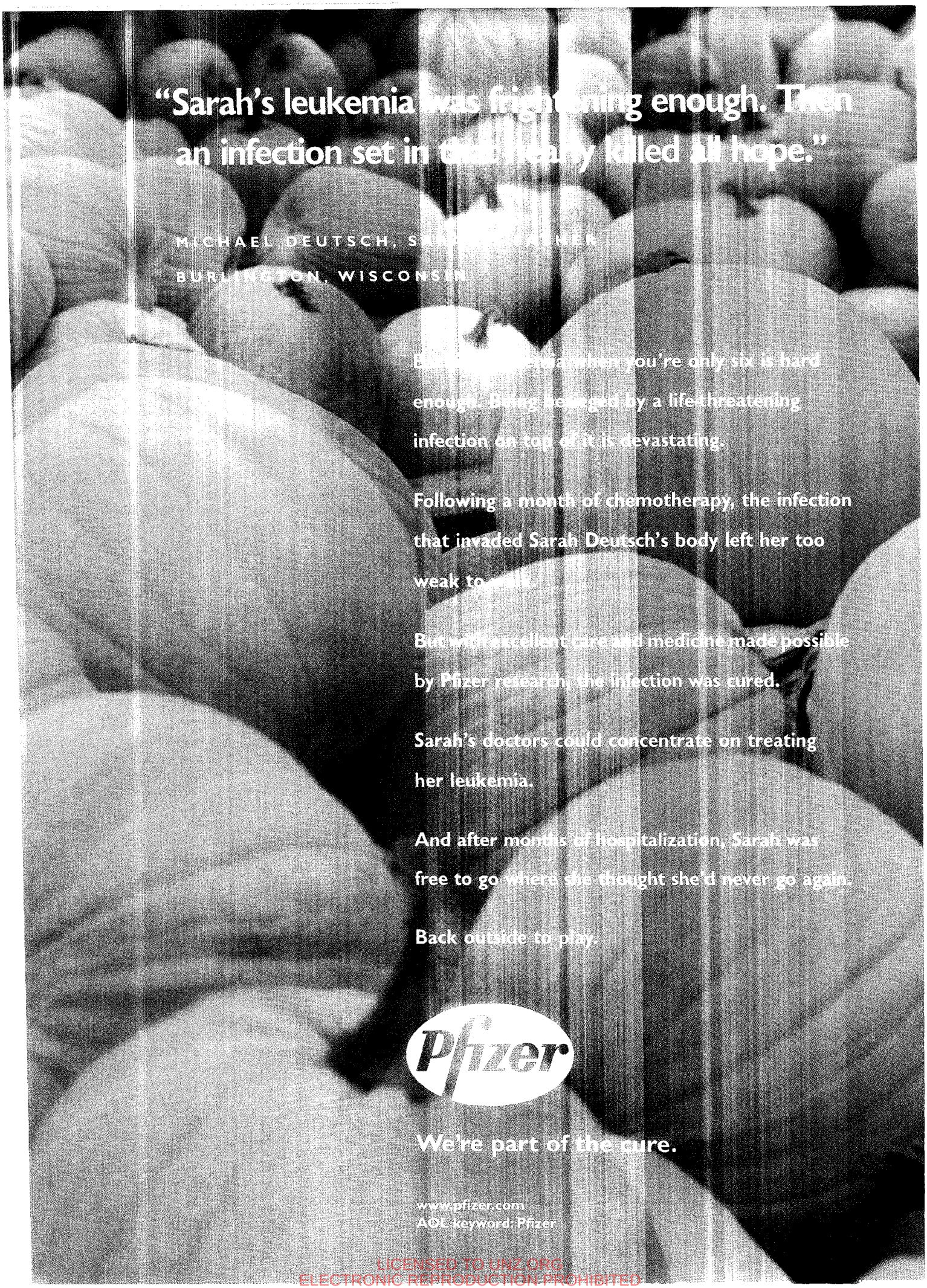
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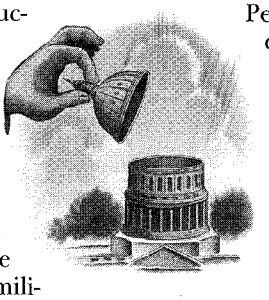
FROM WASHINGTON

Minefield of dreams

When President Clinton announced last week that the U.S. would not sign the new Ottawa treaty banning land mines, he was greeted by a chorus of condemnation. "I fear that our nation's leadership has lost an important opportunity in the urgent struggle to effectively ban these indiscriminate killers," lamented Archbishop Theodore McCarrick, the chairman of the U.S. Catholic Conference's International Policy Committee. "Mr. Clinton should rethink his position," *The New York Times* editorialized, "and make America a leader, not a lagger, in this important campaign."

But sometimes being a lagger is being a leader. President Clinton was right to heed Defense Department concerns, notwithstanding the emotional campaign waged by Princess Di and the anti-land mine lobby. In the past few years, Clinton's foreign policy record has improved precisely because the administration has increasingly shunned the politics of sentiment—the squishy policies that led to mistakes like Somalia.

The main proponents of the land mine treaty are countries such as Malaysia, which are deftly tapping into vestigial Western guilt over the plight of the Third World. Yet, far from successfully banning land mines around the world, the treaty would have tied the hands of the United States, while allowing other major powers to continue producing these atrocious but efficacious devices. (And it would do nothing to prevent the use of land mines by irregular military forces like the Bosnian Serb Army or the Khmer Rouge.) As a great power with garrisons from the banks of the Rhine to the desolate inner-Korean border, the U.S. can ill afford to indulge in selective moralism at the expense of its national interests.



The push to ban land mines is not new. In the 1970s, the Swedes pushed for a ban on anti-personnel land mines (APMs); the result was the forgettable 1980 United Nations Inhumane Weapons Convention which did little more than set rules for marking minefields. Since then, the main forum for discussing land mines has been the Geneva-based U.N. Conference on Disarmament, which has gone nowhere.

Enter the International Committee to Ban Land Mines. Formed six years ago in Washington, D.C., by liberal activists who opposed American intervention in Vietnam, Central America, and the Persian Gulf, the committee did an end run around the American government by appealing to the Canadian government, as Raymond Bonner explained in the September 20 *New York Times*. Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy, who embraced Fidel Castro earlier this year, and has never missed an opportunity to goad the U.S., set about organizing a public relations war against land mines.

Pictures of maimed women and children from Mozambique to El Salvador, flashed around the globe by Axworthy & Co., are riveting and horrifying indeed. No less disturbing is the activists' claim that there are more than 100 million undetected mines lurking beneath the world's topsoil. But that figure is dubious. Writing in the February 2 *Daily Telegraph*, Paul Jefferson, a former bomb-disposal officer in the British army who was crippled by a land mine, questioned the information the press has been disseminating: "The figures being bandied about have been arrived at by methods of which the general public knows little. These figures are then written up in briefing sheets and passed on to journalists who accept them without question.... It is impossible, given non-existent logistical records, to know how many mines are laid in any given theater."

Instead of championing the utopian goal of outlawing all land mines, the focus of anti-land mine activists should be the more prosaic task of clearing existing minefields in newly pacified countries such as El Salvador and Mozambique. But by exaggerating the number of mines, the activists make this more practical goal seem unachievable. And that, alas, is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

What has also been largely overlooked in the controversy over land mines is that the U.S. has already done much to curb these weapons. In 1993, the U.S. extended for three years its unilateral moratorium on land mine exports which thirty-two countries have joined and in 1994, it pushed through a resolu

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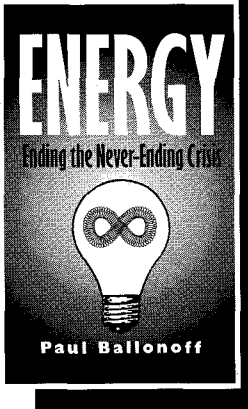

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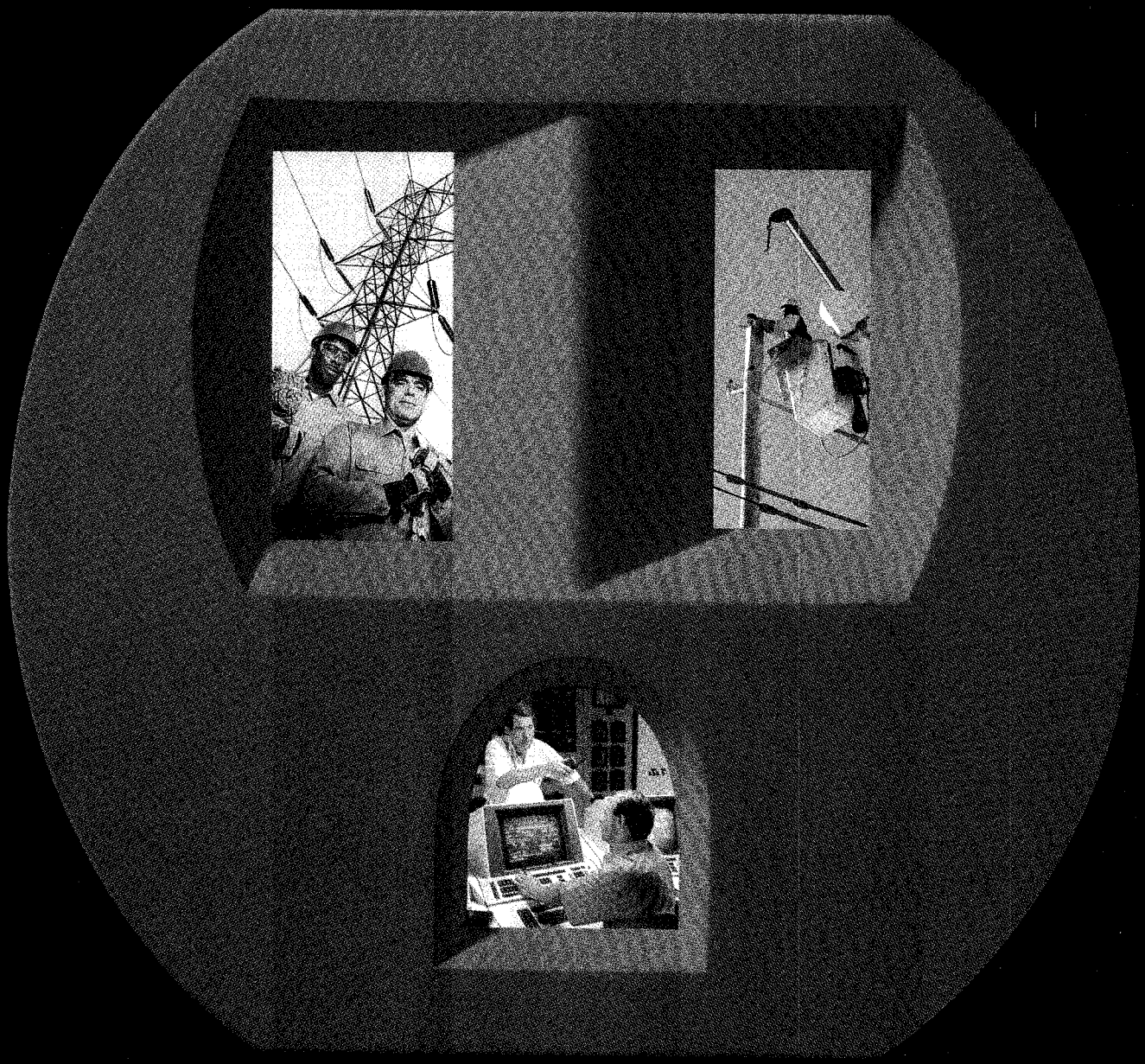

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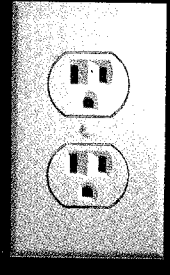

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A Weekly Journal of Opinion

OCTOBER 13, 1997

FOUNDED 1914
WASHINGTON, D.C.
ISSUE 4,317

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THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 217, Number 15, Issue 4,317, October 13, 1997. (Printed in the U.S. on September 24, 1997.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 6 & 13, July 14 & 21, Aug. 11 & 18, and Sept. 8 & 15, 1997) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. The New Republic Advertising Sales Office (212) 702-4882. Yearly subscriptions, $59.97; foreign, $99.97 (U.S. funds); Canada, $84.97 (U.S. funds). Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage & handling). © 1997 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, CD-ROM, issue and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Internet mail address: tnr@aol.com Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 37298, Boone, IA 50037-0298. For subscription problems call 1-800-827-1289.

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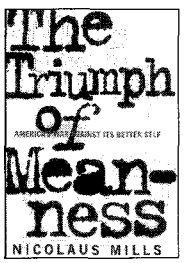

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CORRESPONDENCE

Up against the wall

To the editors:

I would like to point out some serious errors in Jeffrey Goldberg's article, "Unorthodox Riot" (September 1). In his article, Goldberg implied that only the non-Zionist, ultra-Orthodox oppose mixed-sex prayer services at the Western Wall. This is false. Many Zionist modern Orthodox as well as non-Orthodox Israelis also oppose this.

Goldberg also implied that only those who are not Zionists do not sing "Hatikvah" at religious ceremonies. In fact, "Hatikvah," as a national anthem, is never sung on either the Sabbath or on any religious holiday. Even Orthodox Zionists who celebrate Israel Independence Day as a religious holiday do not sing "Hatikvah" on religious holidays.

Finally, Tisha b'Av is a sad, somber day on which we mourn all of the persecutions that have befallen the Jewish people. We do not listen to music on this day nor do we sing happy, prideful songs, especially one like the Israeli national anthem. On this day we mourn the loss of independence that we suffered when the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed.

From the overall content of Goldberg's article, it would seem that he went to the Western Wall that day as a journalist and not as one who wished to mourn with his fellow Jews.

GIL NOAM TANENBAUM
Jerusalem, Israel

To the editors:

Jeffrey Goldberg betrays an unfair bias bordering on incitement when he insinuates that non-Orthodox Jews are denied the right to pray at the Wall.

Ever since the unification of Jerusalem in 1967, millions of people, Jews, Orthodox and non-Orthodox, as well as Gentiles, have had access to the Wall.

The conservative group who came on the saddest day of the Jewish calendar did so to provoke the sensitivities of thousands of people who accept the religiously mandated separation of sexes during religious services.

Goldberg should be more honest, circumspect, and respectful of Jewish tradition and of those who adhere to its precepts.

ALAN STERN
Los Angeles, California

Jeffrey Goldberg replies:

Let me limit myself to two corrections. First, "Hatikvah" is indeed sung on holi-

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days and on the Sabbath in many Israeli synagogues, though apparently not in Mr. Tanenbaum's *Orthodox* synagogue. And second, Mr. Stern's statement that the Conservative group came to the Wall to "provoke the sensitivities" of Orthodox Jews (many of whom were nevertheless "provoked" into calling their fellow Jews "Nazis") is simply false. The Conservatives, as best as I could tell, came to pray.

False advertising

To the editors:

As chairman of the recently completed Wisconsin Governor's Blue-Ribbon Commission on Campaign Finance Reform, I can testify that Jonathan Rauch has uncovered the soft underbelly of Wisconsin campaign practice ("Speech Impediment," September 1). The *Travis* case that Rauch examines is interesting, but it's only a tiny piece of a much larger puzzle.

Days before a spring 1997 State Supreme Court election, an anonymous group mailed more than $100,000 worth of postcards, informing voters about the backgrounds of the two candidates—including the fact that one candidate had received a special award from the ACLU. The cards were targeted at potential voters for whom such an association would make a difference. The targeted candidate lost.

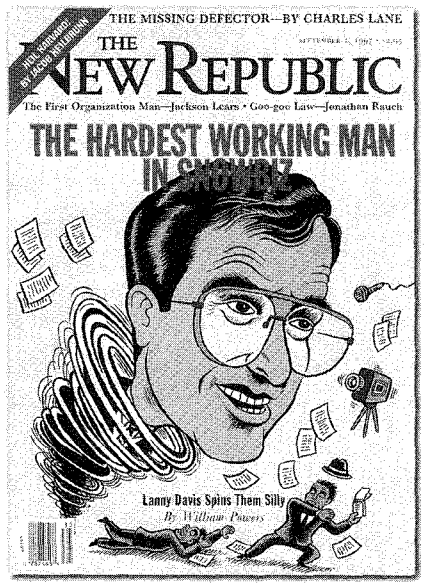
This advertising has been unrelentingly negative and has become one of the most important forces increasing voter cynicism. Like Rauch, I have no desire to squelch the right of those engaged in these activities to speak their minds. But because the rules are different for campaign-oriented speech by independent groups and candidates, on the one hand, and issue advocates on the other, the rise of these tactics has effectively created a two-tier process in Wisconsin. And no reform can possibly work until the Supreme Court's *Buckley* decision, which created this two-tiered system, is reconsidered.

DONALD F. KETTL
Madison, Wisconsin

Undervalued

To the editors:

Commenting on my essay "Human Rights and Asian Values" (July 14&21), Edward Jayne accepts my criticism of "Asian particularism," but insists that the West is very special in permitting atheism ("Correspondence," September 8&15). He believes that the "Western tradition" is quite unique in its "acceptance of religious tolerance at a sufficient level that even atheism is permitted as a principled rejection of religious beliefs." This line of reasoning is quite common (indeed I referred to it in my essay); the trouble is that it tends to come from scholars who have expertise on heterodoxy in European history, but who have not taken any similar interest in the history of ideas in the non-Western world. This was part of the thesis presented in my paper, where I commented on the biases in the readings of "Asian values" coming both from authoritarian political leaders in contemporary Asia and from Western chauvinists who find it difficult to believe that some sophisticated ideas could have occurred—and been tolerated—outside the West. I hope Mr. Jayne would forgive me for thanking him for such an apt illustration of the latter part of my thesis.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Lanny Davis Spins Them Silly
By William Powers

"Where in Asian history," Mr. Jayne asks, "can Amartya Sen find anything equivalent to the remarkable history of skepticism, atheism and free thought?" He may wish to look at the writings of the atheistic schools of Carvaka and Lokayata in India, which originated well before the Christian era, and produced a durable, influential, and vast atheistic literature. Further, aside from intellectual documents arguing for atheistic beliefs, heterodox views can be found in many orthodox documents as well. Indeed, even the ancient epic *Ramayana*, which is often cited by Hindu political activists as the holy book of the divine Rama's life, contains dissenting views. Rama is lectured by a worldly pundit called Javali on the folly of religious beliefs: "O Rama, be wise, there exists no world but this, that is certain! Enjoy that which is present and cast behind thee that which is unpleasant."

Mr. Jayne may also wish to reflect on the fact that the only world religion that is firmly agnostic—Buddhism—is Asian in origin. Indeed, it originated in India in sixth century B.C., around the time the atheistic writings of the Carvaka and Lokayata schools were particularly active. Even the *Upanishads* discusses, with evident respect, the view that thought and intelligence are the results of material conditions in the body, and "when they are destroyed," that is "after death," "no intelligence remains." I discussed in these pages ("India and the West," June 7, 1993) the importance of heterodoxy in Indian intellectual traditions.

Skeptical schools of thought survived in Indian intellectual circles over the millennia, and even as late as the fourteenth century, Madhava Acarya (himself a good Vaishnavite Hindu), in his classic book, *Sarvadarsanasamgraha* ("Collection of All Philosophies") devoted the entire first chapter to a serious presentation of the arguments of the Indian atheistic schools. There are good reasons to be impressed by "the remarkable history of skepticism, atheism and free thought" in parts of the Western tradition, but this does not require that we overlook the "history of skepticism, atheism and free thought" in non-Western intellectual history.

AMARTYA SEN
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Pigheaded

To the editors:

In the midst of a tome about a tome in French history ("Paris Blues," September 1), David A. Bell tells us that Germaine Greer coined the term "male chauvinist pig" in 1970. The notion of history behind this bizarre error is that a phrase or an idea in widespread use only achieves historical legitimacy when it appears in print associated with a famous name. The "male chauvinist" part goes back to communist rhetoric in the '30s. The "pig" part was fastened on in the '60s, when it was in common use among the left to describe a variety of miscreants. The combined term, "male chauvinist pig," was used in the women's liberation movement in the '60s. Bell's error should make readers suspicious of such archaic approaches to history.

JESSE LEMISCH
New York, New York

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Letters should include the writer's full name, address and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Letters may also be sent electronically to: TNR@aol.com

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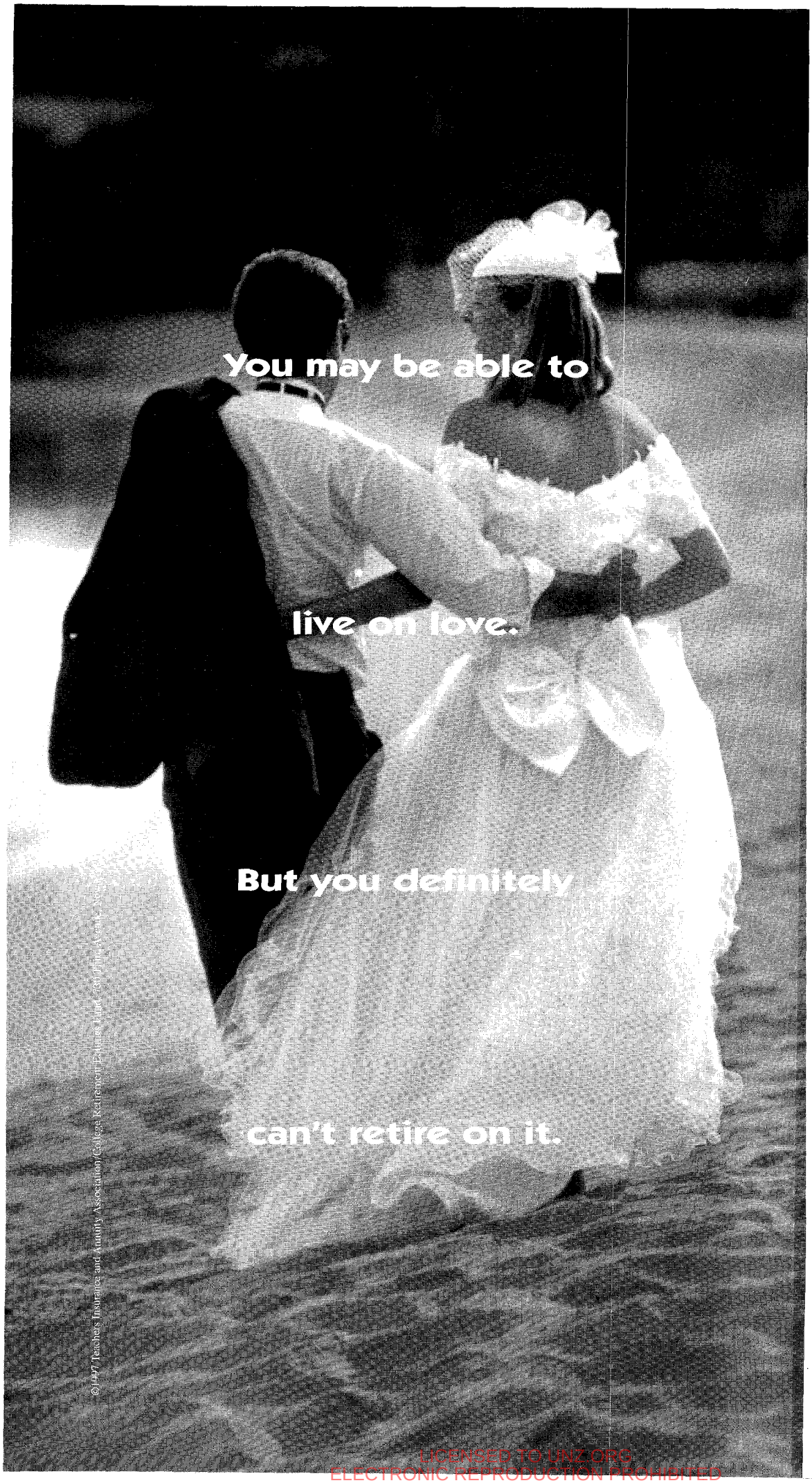

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

OCTOBER 13, 1997

CAREY OUT

In five years as president of the Teamsters, Ron Carey has taken some remarkable steps to clean up America's largest private-sector labor union. He has discarded the symbols of ill-gotten union opulence, selling off the private jets and white stretch limousines his predecessors favored. He has ferreted out much of the union's legendary corruption, placing more than sixty-five mobbed-up locals under direct control of the central union authorities and overseeing the expulsion of Teamster members with ties to organized crime. Equally important, Carey has been an integral player in labor's resurgence, most recently orchestrating a victory in the strike against UPS. But now, for the union's sake, Carey must take another bold step. He should resign.

Last week's sworn testimony by Carey associates confirms what a federal monitor of the Teamsters concluded in August (and what Jeffrey Goldberg reported in TNR; see "Cash and Carey," August 11&18): Carey's desperate 1996 bid to hold off presidential challenger James P. Hoffa was characterized by the same type of malfeasance Carey has staked his reputation on combating. In a complicated series of schemes—which led Carey's campaign manager Jere Nash, fund-raiser Martin Davis, and donor Michael Ansara to plead guilty to charges of fraud and conspiracy—Carey supporters funneled money from the Teamsters general treasury into Carey's campaign, violating the election rule that prohibits incumbent union officials from treating the rank and file's dues as personal war chests. Because Carey defeated Hoffa by less than 17,000 votes out of some 436,000 cast, and because the illegal funds covered some of the costs of a last-minute mass-mailing that may have provided Carey with his narrow margin of victory, the federal monitor has ordered a new election.

Just what Carey knew about all of this, and when he knew it, remains unclear. He denies any involvement with the scheme, telling reporters at the AFL-CIO convention: "If there is a victim here, I certainly am the victim." But Barbara Zack Quindel, the federal monitor, was still investigating when she resigned last week, citing the appearance of a conflict of interest. A new federal monitor will likely continue her investigation and if it is determined that Carey encouraged or participated in any of the illegal fund-raising, then he will almost certainly be disqualified from running in the new election. But even if the federal monitor clears Carey's candidacy, he should forego the race. Ignorance is not the type of excuse that gives a reformer, or his movement, credibility. If Carey will not be held accontable for his campaign's wrongdoing, then he will have become the sort of union leader he professes to despise.

Carey supporters' first line of defense is, essentially, that he didn't do anything different from what his opponent did. They charge that Hoffa was guilty of his own shenanigans, worse than theirs. Though it has gotten relatively little media attention, the Independent Review Board (IRB), a quasi-governmental entity that oversees the Teamsters, is conducting its own investigation into Hoffa's campaign, and there are credible claims of wrongdoing surrounding the $1.8 million Hoffa's campaign took from unidentified contributors. Since candidates must reveal the identities of all contributors who give more than $100, that means Hoffa received at least 20,000 donations of $100 or less. That seems like an awful lot of bake sales to us. If it finds merit in the charges against Hoffa, the IRB can revoke his membership in the Teamsters. But as of now, neither Hoffa nor his campaign have been implicated in any wrongdoing. And until that happens, he is, like it or not, a legitimate candidate.

We realize that a call for Carey's resignation at this late stage is tantamount to conceding the race to Hoffa. This understandably frightens many reformers. But while Hoffa may seem like an old-fashioned goombah, it is at least possible that the direst predictions of a return to the mobbed-up days of yore will not come true; after all, everything Hoffa does will be scrutinized by the federal government. Most likely, Hoffa's Teamsters will simply be a throwback to '80s-style unionism—a collection of petty union bosses seeking to preserve their fiefdoms.

But even if this chain of events comes to pass, it will be because the members of a free and democratic union voted for it. If rank-and-file Teamsters want Jimmy Hoffa as their president because they believe he will do a better job at raising their wages, then that is their decision to make. And if, in five years, the rank and file are dissatisfied with Hoffa and want a reformer like Carey to run their union, then that will be their decision as well. That's the price of democratic reform, the cause Carey did so much to advance—and the cause he can no longer serve as a union president. •

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NOTEBOOK

L. RON CLINTON: With the possible exception of the Attorney General, the country has been mellowing on its president lately. (He may be a rogue, but he's *our* rogue.) So it is useful to have a reality check on Bill Clinton arrive from John Travolta. Yes, John Travolta. The dimpled-disco-king-turned-cartoon-killer-turned-adorable-angel who will now turn himself into Bill Clinton—excuse us, Jack Stanton—in the film version of *Primary Colors*. "I hadn't felt the exact seduction everyone says they feel when they're around him, and I wondered when it was coming," Travolta told *Time*. But then they met at the volunteerism summit in Philadelphia, and the sky fell and the earth moved. This time, however, there was something distinctly uncharming, at least by our lights, about the president's seduction. "Then," Travolta continued, "he said he wanted to help me with the Scientology situation in Germany.... [He] had a roommate years ago who was a Scientologist and had really liked him, and respected his views on it. He said he felt we were given an unfair hand in that country, and that he wanted to fix it." What does Bill Clinton really know about the theology (and the authoritarianism) of L. Ron Hubbard and the "religion" that he founded? And what terrible infringement of religious freedom does he think his friend Helmut Kohl has committed? What he clearly did know, however, is that he was talking to a Scientologist, and that was enough. We share Travolta's reaction to the president's expostulation: "That did it. It was like—wow!"

WELCOME BACK: Former Congressman Bob Dornan is apparently still a wee bit upset over losing his seat to Democrat Loretta Sanchez in 1996. On September 17, the California Republican stormed the House floor, reportedly for the purpose of persuading his old colleagues to overturn the election because of alleged fraud. At least one member wasn't happy to see the old bomber pilot back in the House: New Jersey Democrat Bob Menendez asked the parliamentarian if it was permissible for former members of Congress to lobby on the floor on their own behalf. Dornan, who gained fame calling lesbians "spear-chucker[s]," denied he was doing anything inappropriate. Then he went after Menendez. Literally. Racing across the chamber, his face as red as his hair, he pointed his finger at Menendez, and yelled, ever so sweetly, You "f—ing anti-Catholic." When Menendez rushed to the podium to call for a vote banning Dornan from the chamber, Dornan cried, "Coward!" And afterwards he tried to get the five-foot-eleven, 185-pound Menendez "to step outside" like a man. The normally bored congressional press corps gleefully welcomed back the man who boasts he was "one of the first half-dozen citizens at the assassination scene of gangster Bugsy Siegel" and "traveled under the North Pole ice pack with Al Gore on the *USS Seahorse 17*." But in the end, "the once and future congressman," as he refers to himself, may have done little to help his cause. The next day the House took an unprecedented step and suspended Dornan's floor privileges. One hundred and eleven Republicans, along with 178 Democrats, voted against him.

REBOUNDING RHETORIC: The last time we heard from Michael Jordan about allegations of labor exploitation by Nike, a company to which he lends his good name for a reported $20 million a year, he disclaimed any responsibility: "My job with Nike is to endorse the product. Their job is to be up on that." But last week, His Airness offered his own endorsement of Nike's labor practices when he announced that he will be the chief executive officer of "Jordan," a Nike subsidiary that will produce a line of athletic shoes and apparel. "Jordan believes there is a sufficient effort on Nike's part" to improve its labor practices, Nike spokesman Veda Manager told TNR. One reason for Jordan's confidence? Andrew Young's recent report finding "no evidence or pattern of widespread systematic abuse or mistreatment of workers" in Nike's Asian factories. Of course the Young report is not exactly a solid seal of approval. (See "The Young and the Feckless," by Stephen Glass, September 8&15, 1997.) Among other things, the report lists consultants who were never consulted and includes photos of smiling "union representatives" who were not paid union officials. Maybe Jordan should have stuck to baseball.

TRADING PLACES: One impediment to President Clinton receiving fast-track authority to negotiate trade deals is Congress's vocal anti-free trade minority. But now those who are supposedly even bigger free traders than Clinton are causing the president problems. Senator Phil Gramm of Texas seems to have convinced a number of his GOP colleagues that it's worth sacrificing fast-track to get his way on ancillary issues. "I would rather that the U.S. sit on the sidelines than to see us destroy the world trading process by injecting into it labor and environmental conditions that will disrupt trade," Gramm fumed to *The Wall Street Journal*. But Gramm's position is both legally and historically incoherent. As we have pointed out before, many trade agreements have included provisions on labor and the environment. Besides, the Republicans are hardly in a position to decry efforts to weigh the fast-track bill down with unrelated provisions. Last week Majority Leader Dick Armey—a disciple of Milton Friedman—said that the congressional leadership wouldn't deal with fast-track until they first dealt with that most vital of issues: the 2000 census. The GOP remains terrified that, through the statistical technique known as "sampling," the Census bureau will find too many low-income people and minorities. That wouldn't be a problem if the GOP really believed, as Jack Kemp claims incessantly, that it is the party of the poor. But the less utopian types in Congress see "sampling" as a threat to Republican control of the House. Now there's a question of principle worth scuttling free trade over. •

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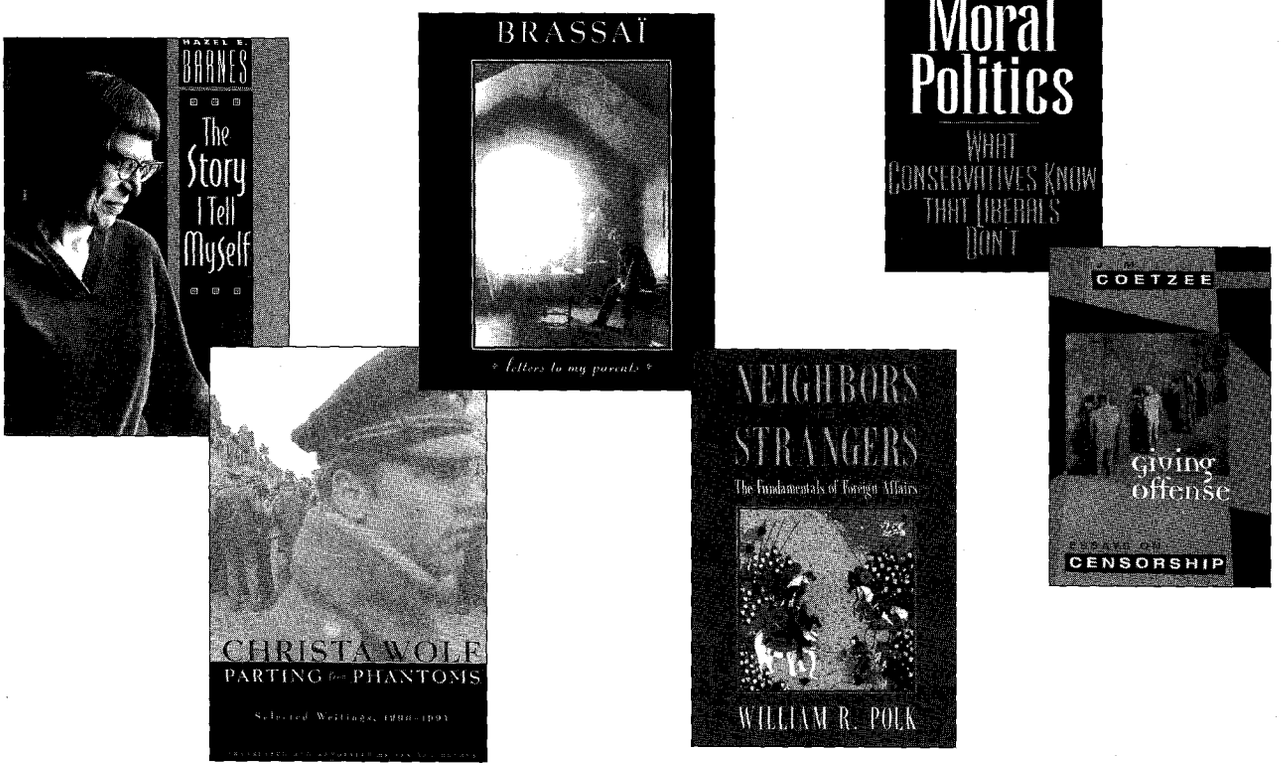

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He's no Democrat.

WELD WISHERS

By Jonathan Chait

While the "identity crises" of our two major political parties are nothing new, the aftermath of William Weld's doomed nomination to be ambassador to Mexico has created the somewhat novel spectacle of both parties struggling for their souls at the same time. After it became clear that one of the most likable and intelligent politicians in the Republican Party would not even be allowed to hold an ambassadorship because the party's most reviled figure, Jesse Helms, has a grudge against him, Republicans took a long, hard look at themselves. And then they decided to cast Weld out of their big tent. Weld's excommunication came in the form of a remark on "Charlie Rose" by *Weekly Standard* Editor William Kristol, followed by a *Wall Street Journal* editorial, to the effect that Weld might be more comfortable as a Democrat.

Amazingly, the Democrats seem to agree. Basking in the propaganda coup—*Weld is too moderate for the Republicans!*—Democratic strategists as diverse as George Stephanopoulos and Dick Morris mused over an imminent Weld defection, and it wasn't long before coy yearning gave way to palpable lust. "If he wants to switch parties," Democratic Leadership Council President Al From salivated to *The Boston Globe*, "we would be delighted to have him."

The Democratic embrace of Weld is based on the dubious assumption that Republicans only want to purge Weld because his Republicanism was a matter of family lineage, not conviction—or, to be more precise, because the Republican Party cannot tolerate his tolerance for gays, abortion rights, and the like. But this assumption is wrong. The intramural fracas between Weld and Helms was personal, not intellectual, according to senators and Senate staffers who have attempted the challenging task of getting inside Helms's brain. Anyway, if the GOP really doesn't have any room for social moderates, then why did it select New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman to deliver the party's response to a Clinton address two years ago? And why did it choose the then-House Republican Conference Vice-Chairwoman Susan Molinari to deliver the keynote speech at the 1996 San Diego convention?

My TNR colleague Peter Beinart offered the most compelling incarnation of the Weld-as-Democrat argument in his recent *Wall Street Journal* op-ed. Weld's fiscal conservatism no longer disqualifies him from the Democratic Party, Beinart argues, since Democrats have embraced it themselves with deficit reduction (1993), welfare reform (1996), and capital gains tax cuts (1997). But the label "fiscal conservative"—ubiquitously applied to Weld—actually obfuscates his true beliefs. Fiscal conservatives all want to balance the budget. Yet some want to do it by cutting spending, others by raising taxes, and there is a big difference between these two approaches. In 1993, Clinton argued for upper-income tax hikes instead of spending cuts; in 1997, he advocated smaller tax cuts aimed at Democratic constituents. Even while moving rightward, Democratic economics remain discernably to the left of Weld's unabashed Reaganism.

Just look at Weld's record as governor of Massachusetts. Most Democratic governors would support funding for children's health care, or an increase in the minimum wage. Governor Weld vetoed them both. Likewise, Weld privatized many state services, cut spending, and reduced taxes nine times because of principled hostility to activist government. This is *not* the same thing as reinventing government, which endeavors to restore faith in the public sector. David Osborne, who, as the co-author of *Reinventing Government*, would know the difference, has himself made the distinction clear. Weld "believes in fairly minimalist government," he told *The New York Times* in 1992, "and he has been willing to throw a lot of people off welfare so he can give a tax cut to business."

So why are so many Democrats ready to toss aside their long-held principles and throw themselves at the first strawberry-blond Republican who becomes available? Because Weld's blend of economic conservatism and social moderation appeals to educated upper-middle-class liberals in places like Bethesda and the Upper West Side. Weld "is where most Americans are on the issues," writes William Schneider in *National Journal*. Oh, really? Most Americans, unlike Weld, dislike affirmative action, don't think gays should be allowed to teach schoolchildren, and see no reason why their Medicare benefits should be cut.

Weld's unpopular stands wouldn't bother me—I'm part of the same minority on most of those issues—if it weren't for the fact that his Democratic suitors are, for the most part, the very people who have spent the last decade and a half lecturing their party on the need to take more popular stands in order to regain political power. DLC President From has made a career out of chastising his fellow Democrats for alienating blue-collar suburbanites who couldn't stomach the party's infatuation with racial preferences, gay rights, and abortion. Now it turns out From's solution is to import a candidate whose only disagreement with the Republicans is his support for racial preferences, gay rights, and abortion. That ought to play pretty well in Macomb County! It's not that the most popular candidate is always (or even often) the right one. But if you're going to sell your soul, you might as well get something for it. •

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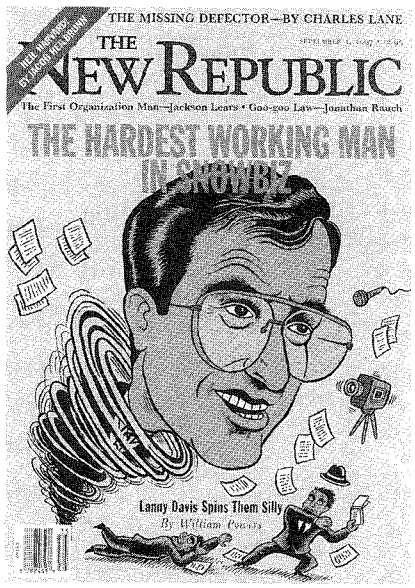
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The new conservative sisterhood.

RADICAL CHICKS

By Hanna Rosin

This fall, conservative Washington women are moving down market. Bored by their power jobs, feeling pinched by their sensible pumps, they're emulating a new icon: the frazzled, J.C. Penney-clad, angry white female. Call it Chenoweth chic, in honor of the gun-toting Idaho Republican congresswoman, Helen Chenoweth. As some ladies on the right have discovered, the great thing about Chenoweth chic is that it offers you a way to experience all the low-cost thrills of working-class life without actually having to move into a mobile home.

But, of course, that makes the right-wing version of cross-class sisterhood every bit as suspect as the left-wing incarnation conservative women spend so much time mocking. Consider recent events at the Independent Women's Forum, a gathering place for the female wing of the conservative chatterati. This summer IWF discovered it was all talked out. "Why do we have to be so ponderous and heavy all the time?" sighs Barbara Ledeen, the usually bubbly executive director. "Sometimes it feels like we're just yap, yap, yapping at people." Ledeen floated a few ideas to cure the ennui—a Tupperware party, a "Victoria's Secret" party—but nothing really clicked until she suggested taking up arms. Ledeen had read a pro-gun op-ed in *The Wall Street Journal* by Laura Ingraham, the princess regent of right-wing female punditry. "By disdaining gun ownership," Ingraham had written, "feminists simply add one more brick to their elitist Northeastern, Democratic facade." Ingraham had suggested a feminist group hold an event called "the Annie Get Your Gun Permit," and Ledeen did just that—reserving a morning at a shooting range in suburban Maryland.

The day arrived and it was lovely, eighty degrees, and clear. Lunch was packed, the course was clear, ammo and earplugs lay waiting. There was just one problem. Almost none of the women (myself included) knew the first thing about shooting. Ledeen had tried target practice once, to protect herself while her husband was away, but she never got the chance to pull the trigger. (No intruders lurked around her Chevy Chase home during her husband's month-long absence, "Thank god.") Ann Coulter, the leggy blond MSNBC commentator, was almost appropriately attired in skin-tight jodhpurs, but then the ammunition belt kept slipping off her invisible hips, becoming entangled in the strap of her Chanel purse.

Out on the firing range, bird after orange neon bird whizzed into the air, soared along its parabolic trajectory, and landed, unscathed, in an ever-growing heap of missed targets. Thanks to expert instruction, some women eventually got the hang of it. (I never did.) Grace Terzian, the publisher of IWF's newsletter, scored a few hits, and Becky Norton Dunlop, the Virginia secretary of natural resources, even hit more clay pigeons than her Marine sharpshooter husband. But some in the group simply threw down their weapons and fled. Christina Hoff Sommers, of the American Enterprise Institute, stormed off with her ears covered, complaining about the noise.

Mary Martino had no such complaints, but then Martino is not a member of any conservative women's organization: she just showed up at the skeet shoot after spotting an item about it in *The Washington Times*. A teacher in a middle-class suburb of Maryland, she has never heard of MSNBC, and could never squeeze into a pair of size zero jodhpurs. She came because she "loves shooting," and does it every chance she gets, twice a month at least. Martino has been shooting for ten years; when she was young, she practiced firing B.B.'s at those miniature tubs of non-dairy creamer they give out with coffee at the 7-Eleven. Now she goes to turkey shoots (best score wins a free frozen turkey) or bowling pin shoots. She was reluctant to shoot at the IWF event, because ammunition was so expensive—$10 a box, as opposed to $6.50 at Wal-Mart. Suffice it to say that Mary Martino and Ann Coulter do not get invited to the same parties.

IWF's skeet shoot was harmless fun—a cheerfully contrived testament to the ironies of the new feminized populism. But sometimes this phenomenon takes a more noxious form. By now you must have seen or heard of Susan Carpenter McMillan, Paula Jones' new "friend and adviser," and now a regular fixture on afternoon TV. In her own way, Carpenter McMillan is also a case study in Chenoweth chic. Decked out in a cotton candy suit and gold medallions, the glamorous "Susie," as she's known in Southern California, has attached herself to Jones, the all-purpose emblem of the hassled working-class woman. There Susie was, at her July press conference with Jones, introducing herself and smiling benignly at her new ward. (Paula is very good with her own kids, Carpenter McMillan explained, and she loves to take Paula shopping.)

For decades, Carpenter McMillan has been the bully in Gucci defending the less fortunate. During her days as a militant pro-life activist in California, she was pained by the way her pro-choice enemies treated their poor poster child, Norma McCorvey, the Texas woman who, as the pseudonymous "Jane Roe," filed the lawsuit that eventually became *Roe* v. *Wade*. "The lesbian-run women's movement," Carpenter McMillan wrote in a 1995 column in *The Times Union*, was disappointed that McCorvey was not a "Vassar type." "They propped her up before the cameras and presented her as a poor woman who needed but was denied an abortion; code words for 'white trash should not reproduce.'"

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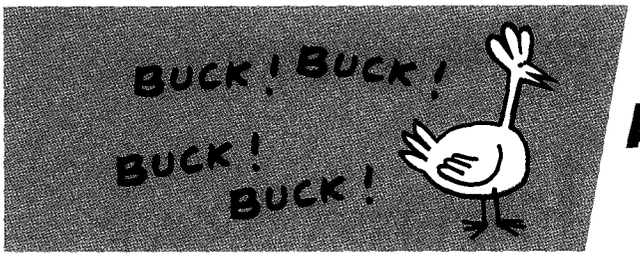

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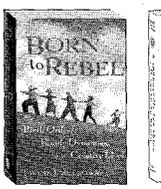

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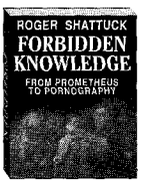

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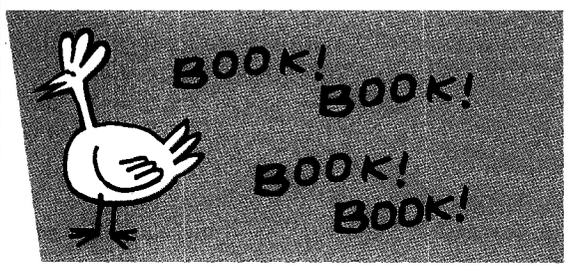

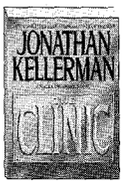

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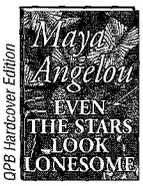

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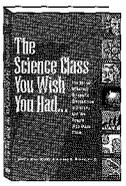

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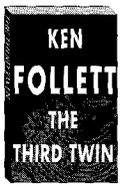

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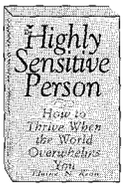

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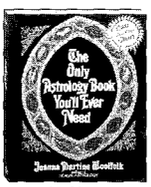

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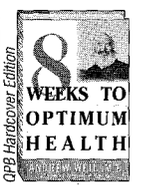

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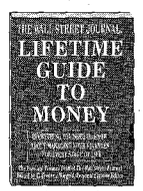

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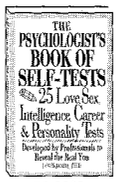

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Still, it did not escape her down-at-the-heels friends that Carpenter McMillan lived in a multimillion-dollar, 6,600-square-foot home on an acre of prime San Marino real estate, that she drove to pro-life rallies in a Mercedes 380SL, and that her diamond ring holds "one carat for every year I helped put my husband through law school," as *The Los Angeles Times* reported. She was eventually drummed out of the movement when the same paper revealed she had an abortion as an unmarried college student at the University of Southern California.

In her new incarnation, Carpenter McMillan proves she still operates according to a rich person's notion of the not-so-rich. She often complains that lawyers and pundits can't speak the people's English, so they carry on in Washington-speak and legalese. How do real people speak? Someone on "Meet the Press" should be allowed to say "wee-wee," she has said. Because Joe Six Pack would say "wee-wee."

Carpenter McMillan also has an equally skewed conception of Jones's case. In a few months, Carpenter McMillan has destroyed all the legitimacy that Jones's original lawyers, Joseph Cammarata and Gilbert Davis, had painstakingly earned for their client over the last two years. Cammarata and Davis left when she came on, and now her husband, a personal injury lawyer, has taken over the case. It was on the couple's advice that Jones rejected the president's latest offer to settle for $700,000 plus a statement from the president that Paula Jones did nothing wrong—the best she is likely to get. And now the two original lawyers claim they are owed $800,000 in legal fees and have placed a lien for that amount on any settlement.

Carpenter McMillan drags Jones right back to the fever swamps of the far right. She's called the president a "slimeball," a "liar," and a "philanderer" on television. "I do not respect a man who . . . exposes his wee-wee to a stranger," she said on "Crossfire" in July. Her particular talk-show tic is the incessant repetition of the host's name through her clenched teeth. In a ten-minute span on that same edition of "Crossfire," she exclaimed: "Well, Bill Press, I know who you'll believe because I know who you'll want to believe . . . Are you crazy, Bill?. . . They were not in the hotel room, Bill Press . . . Bill, you know, get control of yourself, don't laugh all over yourself."

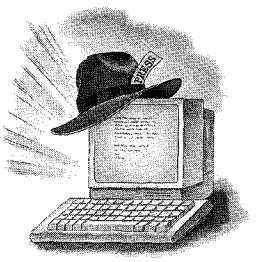
As it happens, Carpenter McMillan knows Bill Press, and he knows all about her. "She has a sick passion for publicity," he says, recalling her days in California. When Press had a weekend radio program, Carpenter McMillan would call almost every show, often from her car phone, sometimes just to say she agreed with him on some minor point. "It was just weird," he says. "She's always desperately wanted national attention." West Coast feminist Gloria Allred has similar memories. When Allred was a television commentator in the '80s, Carpenter McMillan called the station to demand they hire her as well. "This must be Nirvana for Susan," says Allred. "She couldn't have dreamed up something better than this." Still, it could be worse. Just imagine if she were armed. •

SREBRENICA DISPATCH

POLLING ALONE

By Anna Husarska

The small white structure standing near a few ethnically cleansed houses looked like one of those portable bathhouses that the NATO peacekeeping troops sometimes use around here. But on closer inspection, the little bathhouse turned out to be Polling Station Number 105B913, the only voting place in the Srebrenica area for the 28,000 Bosniacs (Muslims) who once lived here. It was, as I soon learned, a fitting emblem for a municipal election that was full of irregularities, but still accepted by the United States and international organizations.



Only 101 Bosniac former residents of Srebrenica actually came to this little bathhouse to cast their ballots in the municipal elections, but this is not so surprising given that Srebrenica has become a synonym for genocide in Bosnia. In July 1995, Bosnian Serbs overran the town, which the United Nations had declared a "safe haven." They killed thousands of Bosniac men. They drove out the women and children. Before the war Srebrenica was 75 percent Bosniac. Today, its population is all Serb.

Foreign election organizers placed the booth a mere twenty meters inside the Srebrenica municipality's boundary line; the relative handful of Bosniacs who voted here could not even see the main street of their former hometown. But, of course, they would not have liked what they would have seen. Serb-held Srebrenica is plastered with posters of the father of all ethnic cleansers, Radovan Karadzic. The town is mostly inhabited by bitter Serb refugees from other places. The rubble of the destroyed mosque in the middle of the town sends an unmistakable signal to any Muslims who might contemplate a return.

The Serbs, however, failed to intimidate the civic-minded exiles. Some 12,000 ethnically cleansed Bosniacs had registered to vote in Srebrenica by absentee ballot—thanks to rules that encouraged the voters to vote in the places they used to live before the war. The prospect of displaced residents triumphing at the polls and installing Bosniac-dominated governments-in-exile did not sit well with the Serbs, and they reacted by

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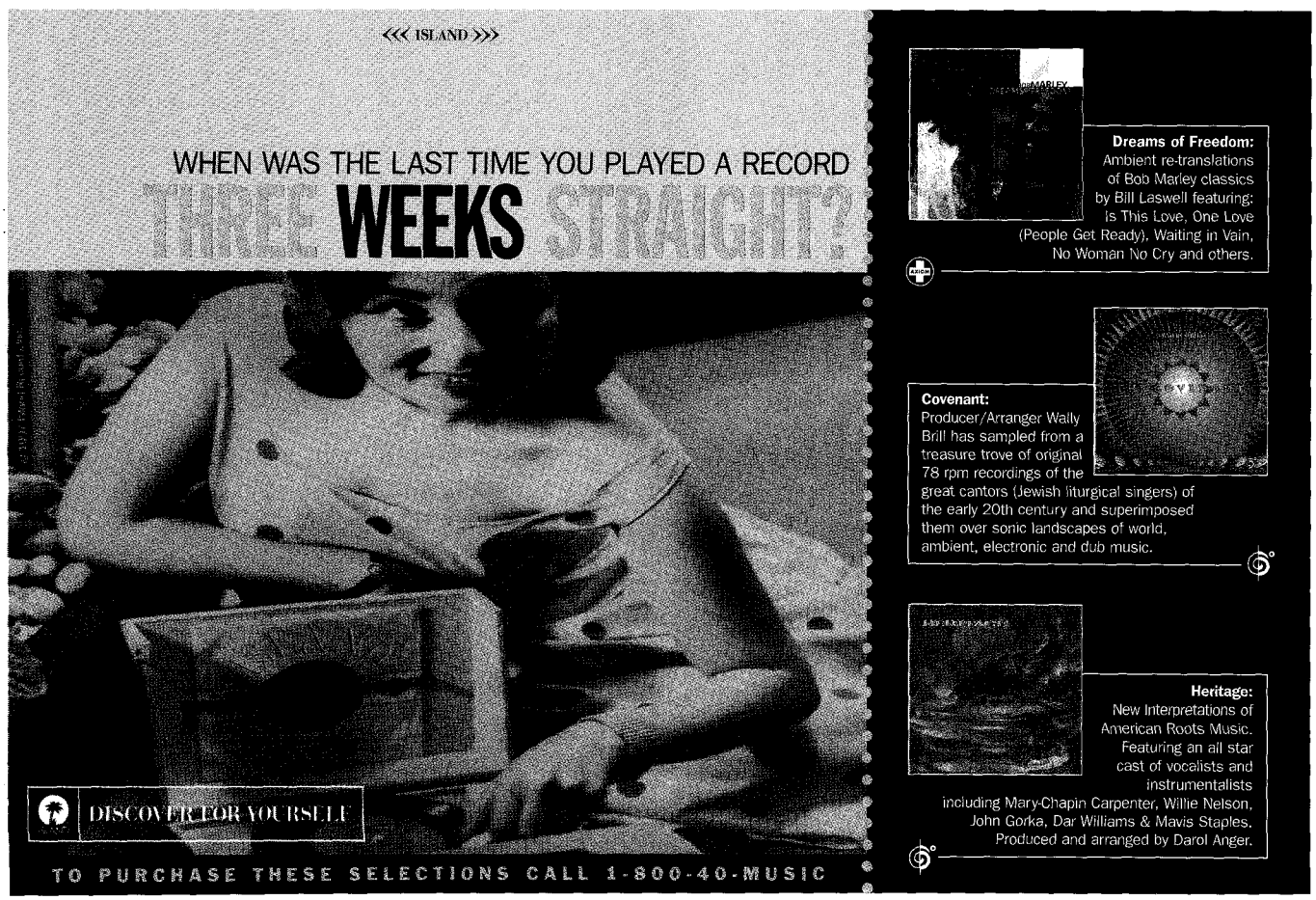
pressing all current residents of the town—including Serbs from the Sarajevo suburbs who came as refugees—to vote in Srebrenica, thus inflating the rolls of eligible Serb voters to 10,000.

Tricks of a similar nature—but even greater extent—took place elsewhere in Republika Srpska, the Bosnian Serb entity. The Serb Democratic Party (SDS), which is loyal to Karadzic, padded the voter rolls with the names of long-gone émigrés, people with phony identity cards, and Serb refugees from Croatia. (The Croat and Muslim nationalist parties did the same thing, but to a lesser degree.) Take for instance Gorazde, the only Bosniac enclave that the Serbs did not overrun. Gorazde is now linked to the rest of the Bosniac-Croat Federation by a sort of umbilical cord of safe passage through Republika Srpska. At the beginning of the war, the Serbs managed to take an area near Gorazde called Kopaci, which they insist on calling "Srpsko Gorazde" (just as they refer to the mountain village of Pale as "the city of Srpsko Sarajevo"). Between 1,000 and 2,000 Serbs live in this ethnically cleansed forty-eight-square-mile area; the voting lists, however, show that there are exactly 6,894 registered voters in "Srpsko Gorazde." Having discovered this, the U.N. refugee agency issued an unusually blunt statement titled "Stolen: The 1997 Municipal Election in Kopaci."

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which monitors Bosnia's elections, has seen this before; during last year's elections, the OSCE initially countenanced so much fraud that the turnout actually exceeded 100 percent in some municipalities. (While admitting problems with the elections, the OSCE later certified the results claiming that wrong figures had been used.) But the good news is that the OSCE's judicial agency, the Election Appeals Sub-Committee (EASC), served as a watchdog during this year's electoral process, punishing the parties which committed fraud by striking their candidates off the voting lists before the vote took place. Two candidates of the Bosniac SDA, twenty-one candidates of the Croat HDZ, and thirty candidates of the Serb SDS party were forbidden to run, including every single one of the nineteen SDS candidates in the locality of Srpski Drvar, all of whom were found to be carrying false residency certificates. (The population of Srpski Drvar is fewer than fifty, which meant there were 2.6 voters per candidate.)

The bad news is that Robert Frowick, the American diplomat who heads the OSCE Mission in Bosnia, couldn't care less about the EASC's decisions. On September 12, pressured by the SDS hard-line leadership in Pale, which threatened to boycott the vote, he reinstated two SDS candidates whom the EASC had banned, even though the EASC's decisions are supposed to be final. To compound his error, he disparaged the EASC by saying that it was "not a legal body."

Having gotten what they wanted, the pro-Karadzic Serbs immediately upped the ante. Immediately after the word got out about Frowick's decision, posters of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Radovan Karadzic, emblazoned with the logo and name of the SDS party, were slapped up on the lampposts and walls of the entire Republika Srpska. And the indicted war criminal with the unruly hair was triumphantly smiling from every corner.

The EASC tried to fight back: the OSCE's own rules and regulations expressly forbid any party with open links to an indicted war criminal from running in these elections. The EASC struck all SDS candidates from the list in Pale, where the violation was the most blatant. However, to give Frowick time to pull his personnel safely out of Republika Srpska, the EASC agreed to delay announcing its decision by forty-eight hours. In return, Frowick made a written promise not to overrule the OSCE again. Then he did precisely that. His ostensible reason: "The security of the OSCE and other international personnel would have been put at risk." Asked about those security concerns, Frowick's spokesman later admitted: "We have had no threats against our personnel," but "the potential for such problems ... gave us a strong belief that these were important considerations."

Frowick did offer two additional reasons for his reversal, although neither was very satisfying. The EASC's "decision would have greatly undermined the OSCE's ability to implement the election results," said his spokesman. Translation: the OSCE can install thugs, but if the thugs are ordered out, there will be problems. The final reason was more puzzling: the decision, according to the spokesman, "does not achieve, in Ambassador Frowick's judgment, what it sets out to achieve, it does not move to reduce Radovan Karadzic's influence."

The day after this abysmal performance by the OSCE, the State Department made its own feeble attempt at damage control: "You would have disenfranchised the voters," department spokesman James Rubin announced. "The time to exclude certain parties from the election would have been many days and weeks ago." Never mind that the proximate cause for the OSCE's decision—the Karadzic posters identifying him with SDS—appeared one day before the voting. And never mind that when Frowick reinstated those two SDS candidates just three days earlier, he overturned exclusions decided "many weeks ago."

The State Department all but confirmed that Frowick was acting at the behest of President Clinton's special envoy to Bosnia, Robert Gelbard. ("Ambassador Gelbard himself felt strongly," Rubin said.) This is no excuse. It only means that Frowick gave in to both Serb and White House pressure. Perhaps the audience abroad was fooled, but not the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosniacs were outraged. They felt betrayed. In the days immediately following the announcement of this shameful decision I learned more dirty words in the local language than I had learned in the previous six years of my coverage of the region. •

In defense of a scandal scapegoat.

WHAT ABOUT BOB?

By James Risen

He's the perfect fall guy: a CIA agent, known only as "Bob," prevented from speaking for himself by the very nature of his clandestine duties. At the Senate hearings on the Clinton campaign finance scandal, Sheila Heslin, a former National Security Council aide, portrayed Bob as a key participant in a plot by officials of the Democratic National Committee, the White House, the CIA, and the Energy Department to broker access to the president and vice president for Roger Tamraz, a DNC mega-donor and sometime CIA informant seeking to build a Central Asian oil pipeline. Democratic Senators seized on Bob's purported role to deflect attention from more prominent officials. Republicans, led by Tennessee Senator Fred Thompson, were so glad that Heslin had implicated Clinton's close aide and former chief of staff, Thomas F. "Mack" McLarty—and put their hearings back in the headlines—that they had no interest in challenging her shady portrait of Bob.

But Bob really isn't that bad. Despite the news stories about him, Bob was not the evil genius pulling the strings behind Tamraz. Bob's main sin seems to be that he behaved as many other Washingtonians in his situation would have—that is, as an overeager bureaucrat. In this case, he was undone by his zeal to supply Sheila Heslin with the information on Tamraz she seemed to want. He tried to keep his superiors informed of potential legal problems presented by the DNC effort to use the CIA on behalf of Tamraz. He may even deserve credit as the man who first alerted congressional intelligence oversight committees to the DNC's possibly improper activities. Nevertheless, Bob is now being hung out to dry by the CIA brass, including new Director George Tenet, who would seemingly rather sacrifice one of his own than take on the Thompson committee.

The essential background to Bob's story is the story of Roger Tamraz's own sinuous association with the American intelligence community. Born in Cairo to a nouveau riche Lebanese Christian family, Tamraz graduated from Harvard Business School and landed at Kidder, Peabody & Company in 1967. As petrodollars began to course through Wall Street, he sensed an opportunity to parlay his Middle East ties into an independent career as a trader and influence-peddler among the region's bankers and oil sheikhs. This led eventually to a relationship with Saudi intelligence, and, by the early 1970s, with the CIA.

Tamraz seems to have performed some useful ser-

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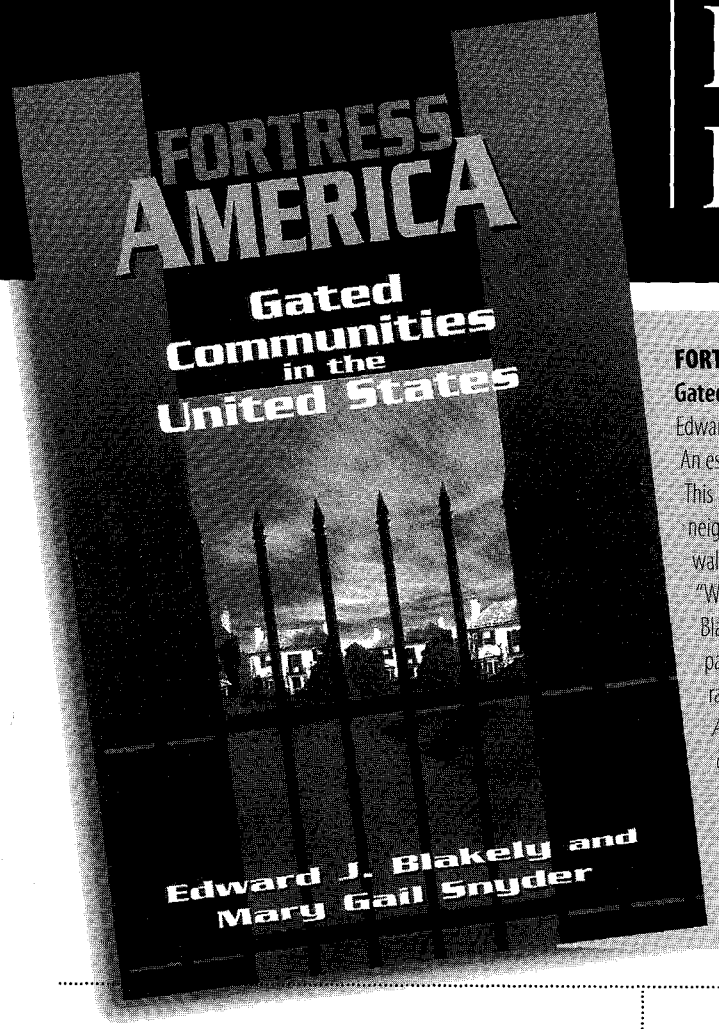

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vices for U.S. intelligence, including allowing CIA spies in Beirut to pose as employees of his company. He helped the CIA Beirut station chief, William Buckley, slip into the city on Tamraz's airplane. He ran messages from Ronald Reagan's CIA director, William Casey, to Lebanese President Amin Gemayel and to Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin. But by the late 1980s, Tamraz's relationship with the CIA had withered, thanks in part to his dubious ventures, such as buying Amoco's Italian oil interests and selling them to Libya. Tamraz also had legal trouble in Lebanon: he was formally charged with embezzling from a Beirut bank, and then was kidnapped by a local militia leader in 1989.

Naturalized as a U.S. citizen in 1989, Tamraz came back into contact with the CIA during the Clinton years. By then, he was trying to put together the biggest deal of his life—a trans-Caucasus pipeline to move a billion barrels of oil from the Caspian basin to Turkey and on to Western Europe and the U.S. As he moved in and out of the Caucasus, he offered the CIA free briefings about goings-on in the region.

In hindsight, it's clear Tamraz did this as part of his broader plan to gain Washington's support for his pipeline. Soon, Tamraz hired Ed Pechous, a former CIA station chief in Bonn, as a consultant to open doors for him in Washington. Tamraz also latched on to Harry Gilmore, the U.S. Ambassador in Armenia, who was moved by Tamraz's talk of a "peace pipeline" through the war-torn Caucasus and who agreed to set up meetings for him at the State Department.

In May and June 1995, Tamraz, with Pechous in tow, held a series of meetings at State, the Energy Department, the Commerce Department, the Export-Import Bank, and finally, on June 2, with Sheila Heslin, who was in charge of Caspian oil policy. Before sitting down with Tamraz, Heslin contacted the CIA's Directorate of Intelligence, the agency's analytical branch, seeking information on Tamraz's company, Oil Capital Ltd. Her message was relayed by another official who told the agency that Heslin "understands [Tamraz] caused problems in Turkmenistan and has left U.S. [companies] in the lurch before. Would like classified and unclassified information."

Heslin's request worked its way through CIA channels to the clandestine service's Central Eurasian Division, where it landed on Bob's desk. Bob asked a subordinate to handle it. He later called Heslin to apologize that his subordinate's brief report included less information on Tamraz than the Directorate of Intelligence had included.

Then Bob made his biggest mistake, which was to assume that Heslin was interested in more information on Tamraz. Eager to please a White House staffer and to make up for the poor initial report, Bob scoured the old files on Tamraz's relationship with Casey and subsequently called Heslin several times to tell her what he discovered. In contrast to Heslin's Senate testimony that he spoke in reverential tones about Tamraz, Bob provided her with negative information on Tamraz's background as well, according to Heslin's notes of a conversation with Bob, provided by the White House to the CIA.

But by that time, Tamraz had turned to the DNC for help in his bid for White House access. In July 1995, he became a Democratic donor; his contributions eventually would total $300,000 to the DNC and state Democratic parties. DNC officials began trying to arrange entrée for Tamraz to Clinton and Gore. On October 2, Tamraz attended a small dinner at Massachusetts Senator Edward Kennedy's home, sitting at the head table near Gore.

Shortly before Tamraz was to attend a White House coffee with Gore, however, Heslin passed on some of the seamier details of Tamraz's biography to Leon Fuerth, Gore's national security adviser. Based on this, Gore's office made sure Tamraz was disinvited, prompting an October 6 meeting between Tamraz and DNC Chairman Don Fowler. As they tried to figure out how to circumvent the NSC's opposition, Tamraz told Fowler about his CIA ties; he gave Fowler Bob's so-called "black" telephone number.

Tamraz called Bob first, and told him to expect a call from Fowler, without telling Bob who Fowler was. Bob then made another fatal mistake—he called Fowler to find out who he was and what was going on. When Fowler called back on October 19, Bob found to his horror that Fowler wanted him to help Tamraz get in to see Gore. Bob demurred, telling Fowler he should contact Gore's office directly. This exchange is recorded in memoranda for the record which Bob began to write to protect himself as the Tamraz plot thickened. But Bob's version is independently confirmed by email messages from a CIA attorney whom Bob visited for advice on how to handle Fowler.

Meanwhile, Tamraz was trying to buy access to the Kremlin, since the Russian government retains enormous influence in the former Soviet republics through which he wanted to run his pipeline. On November 30 and December 1, 1995, Tamraz met in Italy with two of Russian President Boris Yeltsin's closest aides—then-security chief Aleksandr Korzhakov and presidential adviser Pavel Borodoin. Although Tamraz has publicly denied it, CIA sources say Tamraz offered to contribute the outlandish sum of $100 million to Yeltsin's 1996 presidential campaign in exchange for Russian support for his pipeline.

In December, Tamraz returned to Washington, and met with Bob and Bob's supervisor, William Lofgren. In an expansive mood, the silver-haired tycoon boasted to them of his offer to the Russians. Tamraz also told Bob he planned to tell President Clinton about his offer to support Yeltsin—and happily noted that he was no longer having any trouble getting into the White House. He said that his access problems had been solved, thanks to Senator Kennedy and Don Fowler.

Nevertheless, Bob soon received another call from Fowler on December 13, asking again for help to get Tamraz into the White House. Now Bob began to get scared. "[O]n 13 Dec. Don Fowler called [Central Eurasian] Division to ask if we could provide a letter on Tamraz to clear Tamraz's name with the President," Bob wrote in a December 28, 1995 memorandum. "Fowler

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was told that such information should be sought at the White House and that we are legally forbidden from discussing any relationship Tamraz may or may not have had with the agency."

Bob never heard from Fowler or Tamraz again, but he was still alarmed. He wrote more memos and sent "spot reports" up the CIA chain of command, documenting his contacts with Tamraz and Fowler. He told an FBI agent about the Tamraz-DNC matter. He also told a CIA attorney, half-jokingly, that they should file a criminal referral against Clinton to investigate whether he actually was told by Tamraz of his secret efforts to buy influence in Russia.

But then strange things began to happen. Bob's reports to his CIA superiors appear not to have reached their intended recipients. For instance, Bob drafted a memo detailing the entire Tamraz episode, including Fowler's phone calls and Tamraz's efforts to use the DNC to gain White House access; Lofgren, Bob's boss, has said that he signed off on the memo and sent it up to the senior management. But a routing sheet attached to the memo does not contain the initials of any of the top officials, including then-CIA Director John Deutch, who were supposed to get it. The CIA inspector general is currently investigating this discrepancy.

The matter lay dormant until early 1997, when Bob took it upon himself to contact a congressional staffer during Anthony Lake's confirmation hearings. By that time, the campaign finance scandal had erupted. Bob told the congressional staffer about Tamraz's efforts to use Fowler and the CIA to get into the White House, and suggested it might be relevant to Lake's confirmation. The Hill staffer passed the information on to the Senate Intelligence Committee, and Bob was brought up to testify in closed session. Within days, the story broke in *The Wall Street Journal*, and Lake's nomination was on its way to oblivion.

This brings us to the final irony of Bob's predicament. It turns out that it was Bob who set in motion the chain of events that led to Lake's downfall, which means that, if not for Bob, George Tenet would probably not be CIA director today. Yet now, Tenet is refusing to defend his embattled secret agent, who is unable to respond publicly to the charges against him. Throughout the hearings, the CIA refused to issue any public statement clarifying "Bob's" role. The fact that the Tamraz affair is now the subject of an investigation by the CIA's inspector general has given Tenet a plausible excuse for remaining silent.

But that still doesn't explain why not a single senior CIA official even bothered to talk to Bob until several days after Heslin's testimony. The strange subplot about Tamraz and the CIA has injected a note of intrigue, and a note of levity, into the somber story of Democratic fund-raising abuses. It's so much fun, apparently, that no one seems to care if some guy named Bob gets pilloried in the process.

JAMES RISEN is an investigative reporter covering national security and intelligence for *The Los Angeles Times*.

The good news about race relations.

WE HAVE OVERCOME

By Stephan Thernstrom and Abigail Thernstrom

In January 1996, "Nightline" host Ted Koppel gathered a group of blacks and whites together to discuss the issue of race. He divided the assembled participants into two sections—one black, the other white (with the exception of one Asian and one Hispanic). Segregated into separate studios, the whites and blacks took turns talking and (via a monitor) listening. Koppel, who went first to the "black" room, began by asking the participants to tell personal and family stories—for instance, stories of lynchings, he suggested. And with that rather bizarre request, the curtain went up on a drama.

Almost everyone had a tale: of grandparents, fathers and mothers, and of their own painful experiences. Not of actual lynchings, but of past and present wrongs, many serious. "Metaphorical lynchings," one woman called the degrading treatment that in 1996 was still, she said, woven into her life. Most of the whites, on the other hand, clearly felt less comfortable speaking their minds. And thus while one racially identifiable camp was rhetorically armed, the other carried a white flag. But it was a

STEPHAN THERNSTROM is Winthrop professor of history at Harvard University. ABIGAIL THERNSTROM is a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute. From *America in Black and White*, copyright © 1997 by Stephan Thernstrom and Abigail Thernstrom. Printed by permission of Simon & Schuster, Inc.

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deceptive surrender; the whites had conceded nothing important and the blacks had gained nothing tangible.

Americans sorted out by race into separate rooms, unable to look directly at each other, talking through closed doors, in tones of anger. This is the simplistic picture of race relations in the 1990s reinforced by many of the nation's most prominent journalists and intellectuals. Popular culture is infused with "racial signs and symbols that have no meaning other than pressing African Americans to the lowest level of the racial hierarchy," the writer Toni Morrison has said. Political scientist Andrew Hacker has referred to "the new slavery," by which he means the demand, for instance, that "black women who have children and don't have a husband in the house ... go work, even if it's domestic service, even if it's shelling shrimp at a minimum wage."

Politicians, too, parrot this line. Democratic Congressman Charles Rangel of New York, on the eve of the November 1994 elections, reportedly likened the "black suits and red ties" of conservative politicians to the sheets and hoods of the Ku Klux Klan. In 1992, the then-speaker of the California assembly, Willie Brown (now mayor of San Francisco), saw the ghost of the Klan-supported poll tax lurking behind the movement for term limits. Both, he said, "were designed to limit choice.... One wore a sheet and one didn't."

Yesterday and today, one and the same. Decades of extraordinary change denied. And yet, despite the rhetorical continuity, evidence of progress is overwhelming. Consider the starting point: in the early 1940s the black poverty rate was 87 percent. Sixty-four percent of black women worked as domestic servants. The same dismal picture was evident in racial attitudes. At the time, only 45 percent of whites thought that African Americans should "have as good a chance as white people to get any kind of job," and less than half of whites believed that blacks were "as intelligent as white people," according to a National Opinion Research Corporation poll. Only a third felt that black and white children should attend the same schools, and roughly the same percentage said that it would be all right if a black person with the same education and income moved onto their block.

Fast-forward just thirty years, and the landscape is stunningly different. By 1972, 97 percent of whites said they believed blacks should have equal opportunities to get a job, a figure so high that the question was thereafter dropped. Likewise, by the early 1970s, 80 percent of whites believed that African Americans were of equal intelligence; 84 percent favored racially integrated schools; and 85 percent had no objection to having a black neighbor of the same social class. Change since then continued in the same direction. By 1994, only 13 percent of whites believed socioeconomic differences between the races were because most blacks "have less inborn ability to learn"—a figure still too high, but only three points higher than that for blacks themselves.

These enormous shifts in what people profess cannot be dismissed merely as evidence that hostile racial sentiments are less fashionable. Polls may not be infallible guides to the depths of the human psyche, but a mountain of additional evidence indicates that white racial attitudes have truly shifted, in fact, the survey responses square roughly with behavior. That evening on "Nightline," Koppel had set out to improve race relations by finding common ground between blacks and whites. But that common ground already exists—despite what pundits like Koppel, or such best-selling authors as Derrick Bell and Nathan McCall, may say.

To be sure, some polling data also suggest a dismaying level of black doubt about the state of race relations. In a 1989 ABC/*Washington Post* survey, for instance, 26 percent of blacks agreed that most whites shared the racist views of the Ku Klux Klan; another 25 percent of blacks believed that at least a quarter of all whites were in the KKK camp. Between 1983 and 1994, the proportion of African Americans who believed that "most white people" wanted to see them "get a better break" dropped from 33 to 25 percent; the fraction who thought that most whites either wanted to "keep blacks down" or didn't care either way rose from half to two-thirds.

A 1992 poll conducted for the Anti-Defamation League found that 81 percent of blacks and 76 percent of whites thought that race relations were "not so good" or "poor." Most blacks (68 percent) and whites (73 percent) agreed that "about half" of whites in America were "basically prejudiced." Asked a year later whether they thought "relations between blacks and whites [would] always be a problem" or that "a solution [would] eventually be worked out," only 44 percent of blacks were optimistic that "a solution" would be worked out, a dismaying drop of 26 percentage points since 1963—a year before the 1964 Civil Rights Act was passed! Nor has that figure risen subsequently, it appears: an October 1995 *Time*/CNN poll found again that just 44 percent of blacks thought race relations would eventually improve. A Harris poll the same month found that 59 percent of African Americans believed that the country was on "the wrong track" in race relations.

Whether you think these figures are evidence of excessive black pessimism or only realism depends, of course, upon your assessment of how much progress has actually been made in rooting out the racism that long infected American society. Harvard sociologist Orlando Patterson has suggested that while white prejudice has declined dramatically, there are still (by his calculation) roughly two white racists for every African American, since blacks make up only 12 percent of the American population. But this estimate of the size of the white racist hard core may be much too high. When political scientists Paul Sniderman and Thomas Piazza, in *The Scar of Race*, measured the level of white racism by examining responses to five negative stereotypes about African Americans, they found that only 2 percent of the whites in a national sample endorsed all five. And each one of these stereotypes about African Americans, they discovered, was more widely held by blacks than whites, suggesting that

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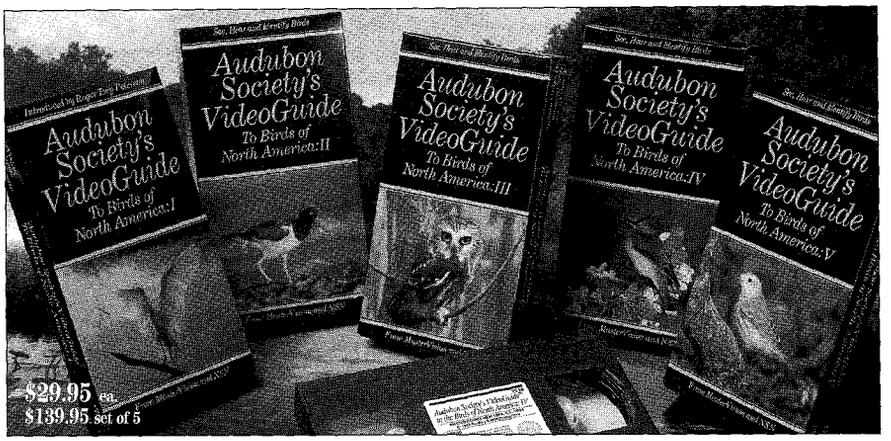
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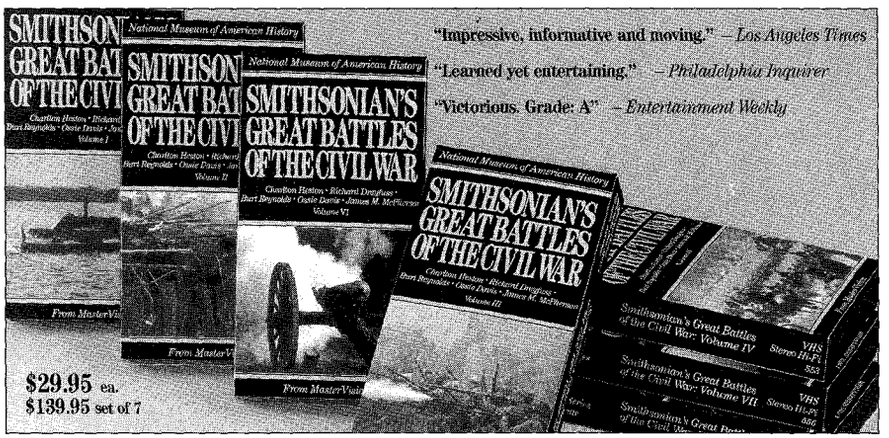
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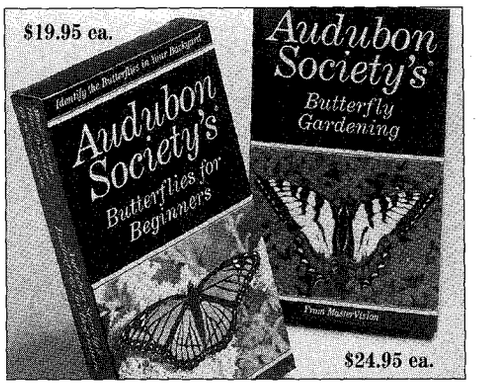

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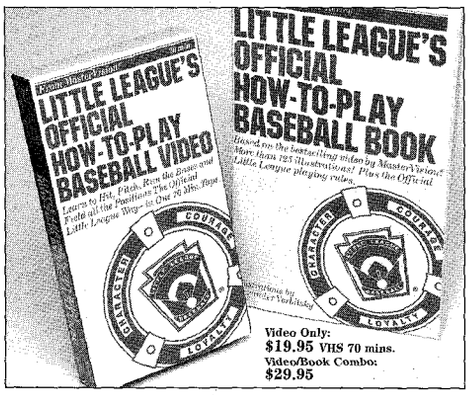

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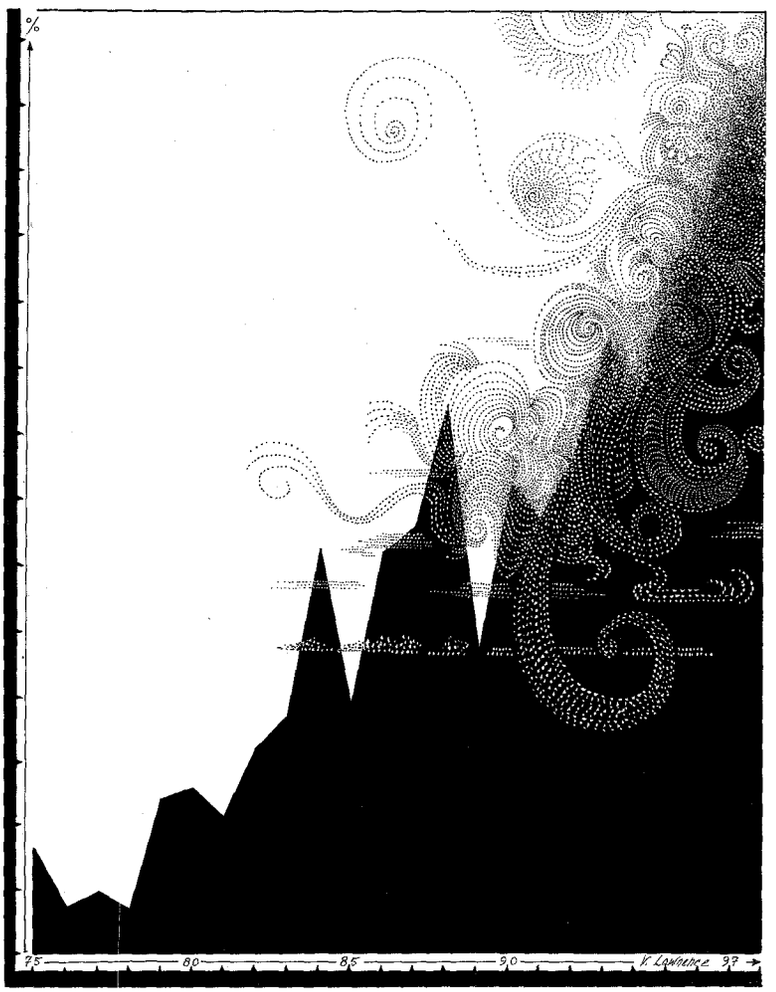
measurements of white racism may be tapping into a general tendency to stereotype groups—even one's own.

Of course, perceptions are important—even if they are at odds with reality. The sense of relentless white racism does not stop the course of racial change, but it undoubtedly influences the shape of that change. Whatever the members of the Congressional Black Caucus, many black writers, and much of the media have to say on the subject of persistent white racism, increasing numbers of blacks are likely to enter the middle class. But the message of closed doors feeds anger and alienation, which is reflected in some of the polling data. And it's deeply racially divisive. If the majority of Americans come to see the bleak views of a Derrick Bell as representative of black opinion, they may conclude that all the good civil rights work of the past thirty years has been in vain. And—most ominously—that future effort is likely to be equally futile.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Fortunately, while many African Americans may doubt the good will of whites, most blacks and whites have retained an impressive commitment to an integrated society. Thus, a December 1996 poll revealed that 84 percent of whites believed that the impact of the civil rights movement on American society had been positive, making it the most popular social movement in modern times—ahead of the environmental movement (81 percent), the women's movement (76 percent), the family-values movement (69 percent), and the right-to-life movement (50 percent). When asked in 1995 whether the most effective way for black people to improve their situation was "to work less with whites and work more with other blacks," only a quarter of blacks thought so. Sixty-one percent of blacks and 70 percent of whites felt that racial progress required interracial cooperation. The year before, a majority (54 percent) of blacks denied that there was "ever a circumstance in which it would be better for a black student to attend an all black school." A June 1997 *Boston Globe* national poll that asked whether "full integration" or "people of different races living apart in separate communities" would be better found that just 10 percent of whites and 11 percent of blacks favored separatism.

The majority of blacks and whites, then, remain committed to integration. And, more important, as of 1992, the majority of blacks are actually living in racially mixed neighborhoods. Andrew Hacker, in his best-selling book published that year, claimed that "almost all residential areas" were still "entirely black or white." Yet that wasn't true even in 1964, and it's not true now. The year the great civil rights bill was passed, two-thirds of all blacks said some whites lived in their neighborhood; by 1994 the figure was five out of six. More than thirty years ago, it was less common for whites to live near blacks than vice versa—a reflection of the relative sizes of the two populations. But, while there are not enough blacks in the nation to provide neighbors for whites in Vermont and Utah, by 1994 three out of five whites were not racially isolated.

Increasing social isolation is also a myth: in 1964, 62 percent of blacks—but only 18 percent of whites—reported having a friend of the other race; now 87 percent of blacks say they have a white friend, while 86 percent of whites report having a black friend, according to the *Globe* poll. And these interracial friendships are not necessarily superficial. A 1975 national survey probed the matter more deeply by asking about "good friends," defined as people respondents got together with at least once a month or with whom they kept in close touch by calling or writing. Using this more restrictive criterion of friendship, the study found that two decades ago just over a fifth of blacks and 9 percent of whites had a good friend of the other race. The same question was not asked again in any national survey until 1994; by then the extent of change was phenomenal. The proportion of African American respondents who had one or more good friends who were white had soared from 21 to 78 percent. The change among whites was even more remarkable—from 9 percent to 73 percent.

Separate church worship for African Americans was

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the norm for most of American history, and the black church continues to play a central role in the black community today. But the color line in religion is no longer nearly as rigid as it once was. Today, a substantial majority of church-going African Americans and not much less than half of whites affiliated with a church are sitting together on Sunday morning. In addition, religious values are often common ground for blacks and whites. In 1993, a black principal of Wingfield High School in Jackson, Mississippi, was dismissed for allowing a student to read a short prayer over the school intercom. His dismissal prompted a huge interracial protest, with teenagers praying outside the high schools and around the state, hundreds of students walking out of class, and thousands of people turning out at the State Capitol to hear Governor Kirk Fordice speak at one of the largest demonstrations in memory.

The crumbling of the taboo on sexual relations between the two races is another piece of good news. In the Jim Crow South, sexual relationships between white men and black females were strictly illicit (though not, in fact, uncommon). Moreover, a black man who became romantically involved with a white woman risked lynching, and an actual marriage between a black man and a white woman was considered even worse than rape, since it meant that a white female had consented of her own free will to what white society considered the ultimate degradation. Of course, the children of interracial unions were denied any claim to white blood by the "one drop" rule. All the Southern states and many in the North made black-white marriages illegal, and white public opinion was overwhelmingly negative even where the law was silent on the subject. Although the Supreme Court boldly attacked school segregation in 1954, it ducked the constitutional issue posed by antimiscegenation statutes for another thirteen years.

Hollywood thus showed some courage when it took up the issue in the 1967 film *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*. Its "love will conquer all" approach to the question of whether Sidney Poitier should marry a white woman was far ahead of white opinion—and black opinion, too. Only 48 percent of African Americans in 1968 approved of mixed marriages, a year after the Supreme Court legalized them.

In the three decades since then, much has changed. Today the black basketball star Charles Barkley, who has a blond wife, talks of running for governor of Alabama—George Wallace's home state—when he retires from the NBA. By now, the proportion of whites who would like to see interracial marriages outlawed has dropped from 62 to 16 percent, and the diehards on this issue are largely found in the South and among the elderly or those with the least education. It's true that a majority of whites still do have their doubts about interracial weddings, but the proportion who say "no problem" has jumped impressively, from 4 percent in 1958 to almost a third in 1978 and 45 percent today.

Other survey data—those on attitudes toward dating

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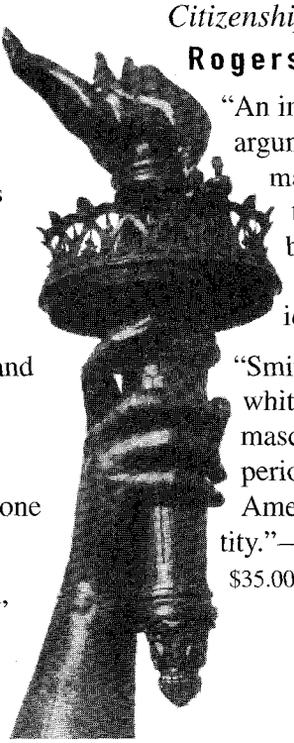

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across racial lines—suggest this liberal trend is likely to continue. In 1963, a bare 10 percent of whites had no objection to their teenage child dating an African American. In 1987, 43 percent of whites thought that interracial dating was okay. By 1994, only seven years later, it was 65 percent and most of the objections came from older whites. Approval among young whites—the ones doing most of the dating—stood at a stunning 85 percent. Although the earliest data on black attitudes are from 1987 surveys, they reveal the same trend. The proportion with no objection to interracial dating jumped from 72 percent to 88 percent between 1987 and 1994. Press reports from campuses play up remarks like that of Malik Zulu Shabazz of Howard University Law School, who said in 1994: "Brothers, don't ever let us catch you out there with a white woman." Such tribalistic effusions perk up a story but appear to have little influence on student behavior.

Actual behavior, not attitudes, is the more important question, and while the data here are incomplete, they are nonetheless suggestive. While the great majority of blacks and whites still marry someone of the same race, the rate of intermarriage has risen substantially over the past three decades. The evidence is scanty before 1963, but no one thinks that mixed marriages were anything but exceedingly rare then. In 1963, just 0.7 percent of all the new marriages that included a black partner were racially mixed. The figure has multiplied more than seventeen-fold since then.

A real increase in these most intimate of relationships between blacks and whites is bound to affect the racial climate. In the Jim Crow South, whites who fought so hard to maintain the old order knew that free and open sexual relationships across racial lines would strike at the heart of the system. What was the logic of strict segregation if it forced husbands and wives to sit apart on the same bus? And today, how long can the voices of black separation maintain their legitimacy as the lines of group identity begin truly to blur? Writers such as Nathan McCall, the Nation of Islam, the Afrocentrists, the separatist voices on college campuses, among others, see whites as the enemy "without," but in a new and more fluid racial order, "within" or "without" cannot retain the same exclusionary meanings.

Hacker called his 1992 book *Two Nations: Black & White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal.* In fact, we are one nation, with blacks and whites much less unequal and, by many measures, much less hostile than in the past. But if the left generally ignores the heartening, dramatic progress, so do many on the right, with their see-no-evil views. Conservatives often seem to think that if they acknowledge the ugliness of our racial history and the persistence of racism (greatly diminished but not gone), they will be somehow assenting to the currently pervasive system of racial preferences and, indeed, to reparations. And liberals, from their different perspective, also fear concession. To admit dramatic change, they seem to believe, is to invite white indifference. As if everything blacks now have rests on the fragile foundation of white guilt.

Not everything has changed as much as one would like, of course. In 1942, George S. Schuyler, an iconoclastic columnist for a black newspaper published in Pittsburgh, attacked the nation's press for what he termed its "sinister policy of identifying Negro individuals as such." He argued that this was "a subtle form of discrimination designed to segregate those individuals in the mind of the public and thus bolster the national policy of biracialism." Gunnar Myrdal, author of the classic *An American Dilemma*, was struck by Schuyler's insight, though he faulted Schuyler for failing to mention that black newspapers were "if possible, more unfailing in giving prominent Negroes their 'race label.'" Myrdal observed that "the Negro leader, the Negro social scientist, the Negro man of art and letters is disposed to view all social, economic, political, indeed, even esthetic and philosophical issues from the Negro angle." What is more, said Myrdal, "he is expected to do so. He would seem entirely out of place if he spoke simply as a member of a community, a citizen of America or as a man of the world."

The Myrdal point suggests another. Whites could shed their racial identity. In the 1940s, when he wrote, they were not only demographically dominant; they had all the power. And thus they had the freedom to view themselves as doctor, lawyer, teacher. Part of the package of privileges that came with being white was the liberty to think in individual terms. Blacks—a segregated and subjugated caste—were always black. The black writer was thus a black writer.

Today most black writers are still black writers. A few celebrities do escape the confines of racial identification, but they are the exception. So while *Time* magazine could feature Colin Powell on the cover, touting his presidential prospects without directly mentioning his race, the majority of prominent black public figures adopt a posture like Jesse Jackson's, presenting themselves as voices from across the racial tracks, spokesmen for black rage, for emotions that allegedly only blacks can truly feel. Jackson wears a badge of permanent alienation, while Powell is a symbol of the American dream fulfilled. Men (and women) like Jackson, however, are the more frequent presence on the American political and cultural stage. And thus, while Saul Bellow is rarely referred to as "the Jewish writer," Toni Morrison is almost always "the African-American writer." In this crucial respect, the world that Schuyler and Myrdal described has remained unchanged. We are far from being a society in which race is unimportant.

In a relatively short time, however, we have by many measures come a very long way. Just think: when W.E.B. DuBois was born, in February 1868, the ink was hardly dry on the Thirteenth Amendment. DuBois lived to the age of 95; he died in August 1963. He barely missed living under slavery, and barely missed the passage of the great Civil Rights Act of 1964. One man's life, unimaginable change—and a tale that holds out hope for the future. •

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THE HARD QUESTIONS

Comparative disadvantage

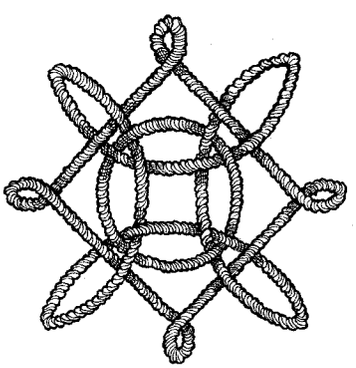
The September issue of a prominent academic journal features the kind of article you'd expect from a touchy-feely sociologist. Entitled "Social Distance and Social Decisions," the article demonstrates why social status and peer pressure—not an individual's God-given talents—can be the primary factors determining whether that individual prospers.

But the author of this piece is not a sociologist—he is George Akerlof, a well-known economist who teaches at the University of California at Berkeley. And the journal in question is not some squishy deconstructionist rag—it is *Econometrica*, the premier journal in economic theory. Increasingly, articles like this are popping up throughout the economics establishment. Economists appear finally to be learning what everyone else has suspected for some time: achievement doesn't entirely depend on ability and effort, no matter what the hyper-pure disciples of Adam Smith might say.

This is a historic turnaround. For the most part, economics tries to explain social outcomes by focusing on the effort and skills of individuals—not social grouping. This kind of thinking can be useful when studying how changes in technology and consumer incomes affect prices in the marketplace. But, when it comes to explaining the root causes of economic inequality in modern societies, this individualistic approach is frightfully flawed. Individuals, after all, exist within complex social networks. People are members of nuclear and extended families; they belong to religious and ethnic groups; they are part of communities rooted in geographic localities. Because opportunity is conveyed along the synapses of these social networks, inherited social position is a major determinant of an individual's ultimate economic success.

A vivid example of this reality comes from Roger Waldinger, a sociologist from UCLA. In a new book called *Still the Promised City?*, Waldinger observes that, while the exodus of whites from New York over the last quarter-century has opened up jobs in a number of industries, it is immigrants—not native blacks—who have been able to take the most advantage of these opportunities. The reason: hiring in these industries depends heavily on word-of-mouth information and personal references from current employees. Ethnic New Yorkers, Waldinger says, have created networks that help members of their own groups while proving "inhospitable to outsiders" (who are often black).

Economists, of course, were always aware of such social influences on market outcomes; but, unlike sociologists, they usually de-emphasized them. Now this appears to be changing. Several excellent research articles on inequality—each recognizing the central importance of social affiliations—have appeared in top economics journals in recent months. For example, the latest issue of *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*—which Harvard's economics department has edited for over a century—includes a path-breaking statistical analysis by two economists, David Cutler and Edward Glaeser, who ask the very unorthodox question, "Are Ghettos Good or Bad?" They answer it by comparing rates of schooling, employment, earnings, and unwed pregnancy among blacks living in cities that exhibit varying degrees of segregation. Their conclusion: "blacks are significantly worse off in segregated communities than they are in nonsegregated communities." They estimate that a 13 percent reduction in segregation would eliminate about one-third of the black-white gap in most of the outcomes they studied.



Another instance of this trend in fresh economic thinking comes from Edwin Mills and Luan Lubuele, writing in the June 1997 edition of the *Journal of Economic Literature*, an official publication of the American Economics Association. In a review of research over the last three decades on the social and economic problems of inner cities, Mills and Lubuele conclude that we still do not know why "low income black residents actually or potentially eligible for jobs that have moved to suburbs [have] not followed such jobs to the suburbs." They, too, conclude that classical economic theory, with its emphasis on the individual, cannot account for this lack of migration—especially in light of the huge movement of poor blacks from the South to the industrial North after World War II.

Together, these articles and several others constitute a trend of more than just academic interest. To the extent that we believe society is just an amalgam of individuals, where unequal outcomes reflect nothing but the unequal talents and efforts of individual persons, we will be inclined to tolerate economic inequality, reasoning that the more productive deserve their greater reward. But once we acknowledge the social origins of individual disparities, it becomes difficult to think of society's winners as morally entitled to their greater prosperity. We begin to entertain the idea that people don't necessarily merit the good fortune of a propitious location in the social network.

Nowhere is this point more important than in the current debate over affirmative action, particularly as it applies to the educational opportunities of young students. In Boston, for instance, parents recently filed suit against the Boston public schools because the prestigious Boston Latin School selected half of its incoming class on the basis of exam performance, and half using a formula designed to achieve some racial diversity. Many people understandably believe enrollment should be based on "merit" alone. But it seems odd to talk about children no more than 14 years old as the bearers of merit, defined in turn by scores on a test. Of course, a school dedicated to the most academically talented students must ration its spaces, and the use of a test is a reasonable instrument to guide the selection. But that does not mean we should ignore altogether what we know about the social structures of opportunity that operate all around us.

It is to be expected that upper-middle-class children who have attended exclusive private academies through the primary grades will test near the top of the scale among applicants to a selective public high school. But are they entitled on that basis to be chosen over outstanding students from less well-off communities who have not done quite as well? What would be wrong with an admissions policy which makes a place for a few students from each of the elementary schools in the city, provided they scored above some minimum threshold?

Those who would interpret the Constitution as barring such a modest use of preferences in the selection of a public exam school class are deeply mistaken. We can, if we so choose, allocate some public resources so as to mitigate the inequalities that are produced, and reinforced, through the processes of social affiliation. And for the first time in many years, we can even turn to economists to explain why we should.

GLENN C. LOURY

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Storms, Fake and Real

With one film Ang Lee has changed from a prize to a problem. Born in Taiwan, Lee studied theater and film at American universities, then went back to Taiwan to work. His earliest films were set in Taiwan. *The Wedding Banquet* moved; it was about Taiwanese in New York. But *Eat Drink Man Woman* was once more set in Taiwan. A few years ago it was announced that he would direct *Sense and Sensibility*. Some of us were surprised at the choice but were all the more surprised by the excellent result. Lee had the sense and sensibility for Austen.

Now, however, comes **The Ice Storm** (Fox Searchlight). Adapted from a novel by Rick Moody, it takes place in the early 1970s—during the Watergate troubles—in New Canaan, Connecticut. When it was announced that Lee was to direct it, those of us who had sniffed at his selection for Austen chuckled and said that we had learned our lesson: Lee would adapt empathetically to this quite different milieu and atmosphere. But this time the surprise is negative.

The Ice Storm is a tale of suburban adultery, mixed with the sex fumblings of the adolescent children of those adults. The script is a heap of stale maneuverings, quarrels, adjustments, realizations, all set in luxe homes and all residually familiar since World War II. Vittorio De Sica was once asked why so many of his films dealt with adultery, and he replied that, if you take adultery out of the lives of the bourgeoisie, there is no drama left. *The Ice Storm* is a desperate confirmation of that belief, here laced with early adolescent sexual heat. Watergate, for all that we get flashes of Nixon on TV and the comic use of a Nixon mask in one scene, has absolutely nothing to do with the texture or intent of the picture: it's just portentous décor.

The plaguey question about Lee is: how a man who had been so perceptive with early nineteenth-century England (and, of course, his Taiwanese compatriots) could be so unperceptive about the dullness of quasi-contemporary material in a country he knows pretty well. What's worse, or perhaps consequential, his very talent in directing, his work with actors and camera, is much less keen here than in any Lee film I've seen. Over and over again in Austen, his framing, his course of action, his editing suited and amplified the essence of the scene. But here everything in his directing, absolutely everything, is banal.

Which was the aberration, the delicate beauties of the Austen film or the pretentious torpor of this one? Time will tell, I suppose, and I hope the news is pleasant.

The screenplay is by James Schamus who coproduced the picture and who has often worked with Lee before, including the Austen. Schamus also coproduced *The Myth of Fingerprints*, reviewed here last week, a flat account of familial affairs. *The Ice Storm*, familial, too, is at least as flat but is wrapped more expensively and sententiously. Here we have suburban key parties (wife-swapping) and the kids' glandular forays instead of the New England reticence in *Fingerprints*, but nothing rewards us in all these trackings and travelings in either case. In *The Ice Storm*, the title is fulfilled predictably with a storm that is meant to have some kind of figurative force; but, although it causes a death, it is no catalyst or metamorphosis for the people involved. It's hard to believe that lives, manners, morals will be enlarged by the experience of the storm.

Kevin Kline, as an errant husband, Joan Allen, as his somewhat numbed wife, and Sigourney Weaver, as the sexy dragon lady of their set, are quite competent and do what they can, which isn't much. Three adolescent boys are cast with young actors who look so much alike that it's hard to distinguish one from another.

In June of 1931 the Soviet Union produced what is regarded as its first sound film, *The Road to Life*, directed by Nikolai Ekk. The subject was the thousands of homeless orphans cast adrift by the civil war, youngsters who simply wandered around the country, living as they could, criminally or otherwise. And, naturally, the film showed how the new government finally cared for and rehabilitated them.

In the United States, in the early 1930s when the Depression was blasting family security, thousands of people, many of them adolescents, took to the road—to the railroad, in fact, hopping freight trains around the country in search of work or just escaping from home heaviness. In 1934, inspired by the Soviet film, Warner Brothers produced *Wild Boys of the Road*, directed by William A. Wellman,

FILMS WORTH SEEING

In the Company of Men. *Diamond-cut writing and directing by newcomer Neil LaBute. As cruelly as in a Restoration comedy, two young men play a trick on a young woman. Surprising results, of course. (Reviewed 9/1/97)* **Mrs. Brown.** *The widowed Queen Victoria and her Scottish groom John Brown. A true but near-incredible story, delightfully acted and presented. (8/4/97)* **My Mother's Courage.** *Michael Verhoeven directs George Tabori's script about the experiences of Tabori's mother in Nazi-occupied Hungary. Scary, but, of all things, grimly humorous. Deftly done throughout. (9/29/97)* **A Self-Made Hero.** *Delicately bitter tale of a French impostor in World War II who made it to a happy ending. (9/22/97)*—**SK**

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a somewhat sanitized version of current conditions with a grossly saccharine ending, yet with some strong scenes in it of conflict between vagrants and authorities with clear sympathy for the vagrants.

Wild Boys of the Road is now showing on a double bill in some places with a new documentary called **Riding the Rails** (Artistic License), made by Michael Uys and Lexy Lovell. Uys and Lovell have woven a film, quietly stark, out of Depression newsreels, a clip from Wellman's film, and recent interviews with elderly people who rode the rails in the '30s, who survived and found rewarding lives. (One old fellow still likes to hop freights for fun.)

Everyone knows the word Depression, everyone has read about it and seen photographs, but few today are prodded by the reality of it. For someone like myself, who saw long lines of people waiting for a bowl of soup and a chunk of bread at a soup kitchen in Times Square, who (twice) saw the police taking away the frozen corpse of a man who had spent the winter night in a doorway covered with paper, the reality is paradoxical. I can still smell the metallic air of the Depression years, but it seems to have happened to someone else on another planet—a history discontinuous with us now. The United States today has a grotesquely large homeless population, and the word "welfare" is not exactly archaic; but today the statistics about underfed children and family disasters are set not against bread-lines, but against streets lined with expensive cars, expensive restaurants crammed with people. Today poverty plays out against a velvet backdrop. Not in the 1930s—or, at least, much less patently so.

In those days, says this documentary, a quarter of a million people were riding the rails with very little to hope for—looking, we might say, for a destination. In a strange way the facts are even harder to believe for those who witnessed some of what happened. Those facts seem even further away for us. •

Medicine, multiculturalism, and the duty of physicians.

Doctors and Deities

By Sherwin B. Nuland

"Neil and Peggy were excellent physicians, but ... imperfect healers." In those very few words near the end of her fine, textured study of an immigrant family's struggle with American doctoring, Anne Fadiman articulates the single most fundamental source of contention between today's medical establishment and those who entrust themselves to its care. In the minds of many of its most fairminded and supportive critics, the greatest challenge faced by Western medicine as it evaluates itself in the fading days of the twentieth century is not one that can be overcome in laboratories of immunology, genetics, or microbiology, or in the thinktanks of health care planners. It must be met at the bedsides of the sick.

The challenge is an old one, but the profession has never universally acknowledged its gravity in the modern era, nor has confronting it been treated as a worthy endeavor by those responsible for training young physicians, except perhaps in lip service. Simply stated, the challenge is to respond to a reality whose enormous consequences are too often underestimated or ignored: patients bring to doctors not only their diseases, but also their entire lives, including the cultures and the worldviews of their families' history. American clinical teachers are fond of enjoining their students never to forget that diseases occur in sick people and not only in sick organs—and then they ignore their own injunctions by going ahead and treating those same patients as though they were no more than containers for the pathology. As in every other situation, the young learn far more from the actions of their elders than from their words.

Some of those whose writings have addressed such failings in our approach to caregiving have taken great pains to call attention to the distinction between disease and illness. Arthur Kleinman has defined disease as the problem as seen from the point of view of the doctor, and illness as the problem as seen from the point of view of the person who is sick. In *The Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing and the Human Condition*, his important work that appeared in 1988, Kleinman wrote that "in the narrow biological terms of the medical model, this means that disease is reconfigured only as an alteration in biological structure or functioning." On the other hand, "By invoking the term illness, I mean to conjure up the innately human experience of symptoms and suffering. Illness refers to how the sick person and the members of the family or wider social network perceive, live with, and respond to symptoms and disability.... And when we speak of illness, we must include the patient's judgments about how best to cope with the distress and with the practical problems in daily living it creates."

Essentially, then, a disease consists of the microscopically or chemically demonstrable manifestations of a pathological process so similar in all people afflicted with it that it can be recognized from a detailed description in a textbook. The evidence of its existence is objective, verifiable by others. An illness, by contrast, is the total of the psychological, social and cultural ways in which the sick person experiences the bodily changes caused by the disease. By its nature every illness is subjective, distinct to the individual in whom it makes its presence known.

But no sick man is an island unto himself. The illness of an individual is experienced and interpreted in terms that he has inherited, and shares with others who are not ill but are like him. It is in "the wider social network" of illness that Anne Fadiman's book finds its focus. Of such networks, Kleinman has this to say: "Local cultural orientations (the patterned ways that we have learned to think about and act in our life worlds and that replicate the social structure of those worlds) organize our conventional common sense about how to understand and treat illness; thus we can say of illness experience

The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures
by Anne Fadiman
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 339 pp., $24)

Sherwin B. Nuland is the author most recently of *The Wisdom of the Body* (Knopf).

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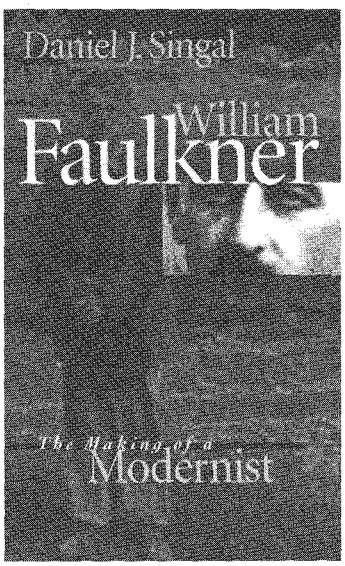

William Faulkner

The Making of a Modernist

Daniel J. Singal

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that it is always culturally shaped."

Anyone being medically trained in an American urban center (which means almost all of our physicians), but especially those who became doctors in the 1950s or before, has been exposed to a wide variety of cultural influences among his patients. Before the extensive participation of so many working people in Blue Cross and other systems of third party payment, patients who might nowadays be considered members of the lower middle class—and even further down on the socioeconomic ladder—were almost always treated on the ward or charity divisions of teaching hospitals. This meant that many of those admitted to the so-called training services of these hospitals were middle-aged or elderly foreign-born patients who had come to America from Europe in one or another of the large waves of immigration since the last decade or two of the nineteenth century. More than a few of them did not speak English. It was not uncommon to encounter families who were terrified by the system into which they had been plunged, who were unable or unwilling to comprehend its rules or to abide by the decisions of the white-uniformed young men (we were almost exclusively men) who ruled imperiously over their health and sometimes their destinies.

In the hospital where I trained, Yale-New Haven, most of the immigrants were southern Italians, Slavs or East European Jews, but we had a sprinkling of other European groups too, and also the occasional Hispanic, Gypsy or Cantonese. Other than the Chinese, there were no Asians. In addition to these arrivals, New Haven—like so many cities of the Northeast in those days—had recently become the destination of many indigent rural black families, who seemed in our case to have come primarily from South Carolina. In a sense, our resident physicians dealt every day with a microcosm of the melting pot in which not much melting had yet occurred.

Unlike many of their patients, the young doctors on the medical, surgical, and pediatric services had (with some exceptions) been born in the United States, and in almost every case into families that had reached these shores at least several generations earlier. Those few of us who were the sons of immigrants were preoccupied with our own headlong dash toward acceptance by our colleagues and by the WASPy corps of professors to whom we looked as mentors and often as models. Multiculturalism would not breathe its first breath for decades. Any hint of ethnic pride was submerged in the interests of the universalism and the uniformity that were unquestioned American values in those days.

Almost all of the very few of us who were but a generation removed from one or another of these immigrant groups tended to keep our distance, choosing to identify not with our patients but with our colleagues, among whom we numbered, of course, our closest friends. Rarely was a young doctor willing to serve as an intermediary for a patient, lest it reveal too uncomfortable a closeness to similar origins. I remember an Italian-born colleague (who had long propagated a rumor about his high-flown lineage) refusing to interpret or otherwise act as an advocate for an elderly and frightened Neapolitan man, because he sneeringly claimed not to understand the man's low-class dialect.

We made our rounds as though among interesting specimens of friendly but incompetent transplants from various foreign proletariats and peasantries, here and there patronizingly sprinkling the few words of their languages that we had found it absolutely necessary to learn. We were amused by their old-world customs, and certainly by their attitudes toward sickness. To us, they were a superstitious and uneducated lot. As much as we might learn from their organs and tissues, we were certain that their lives and their cultural beliefs had nothing to teach us about the practice of good medicine. We concentrated on their pathologies and studied their diseases. We were trained to become, as Fadiman's Neil and Peggy would become, excellent physicians. It would have shocked every one of us to be told we were not good healers.

Many of us would later—sadly, decades later—wake up, the awareness usually being as slow to develop as it was painful. That we awoke was due to an amalgam of reasons. Some of the rousing from smugness was the result simply of time, and its tendency to afflict the self-satisfied and the self-righteous with the experience of their own vulnerability to sickness and tragedy. We finally saw ourselves mirrored in the physicians treating us and our families, whose humanity we so desperately yearned to evoke, and usually didn't. True empathy is granted to few of us until adversity makes inevitable our identification with those whom we have previously perceived as being different from ourselves. For some physicians, it seems not to appear until they have been beaten and bruised by life sufficiently to assimilate the anguish that is part of everyday existence for so many people, and made so much worse by illness and the specter of death.

Some of our increasing awareness was the result of factors far less personal.

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Demographics had far-reaching effects on the perception of "the other" in the current America, where the figure of the WASP plays ever a smaller role. As the Hispanic and Asian proportions of our population grow, we are finding ourselves immersed in the folkways of ethnic groups much slower and less likely than earlier ones to melt into a unanimity of American appearance and behavior. In addition, the enlarging black middle class has become increasingly a factor in the greater American society, even as a wide-ranging variety of African American patterns of speech and activity have been valued to the point of imitation by recent generations of white youth. Thus, a sense of ethnicity is no longer equated with a sense of inferiority. Not being a quality to be purged, the particularity of one's identity has become a quality to be proud of, to flaunt.

For these reasons, the needs and the customs of so-called minorities have become the very warp and woof of daily life in our country. A physician training in the bustling urban hospital of today cannot properly care for his patients unless he takes into account at least a modicum of the variations in background and worldview that they so overtly bring to their sicknesses. But that is hardly the end of the story. Acting against the humanization of medical practice, against the acceptance of the notion of illness as distinct from disease, is a trend so forceful that it has engulfed the gains made in recent years and quite overpowered them. I refer, of course, to the massive increase in the influence of laboratory science and clinical distance in the evaluation and the treatment of the sick. Today's physician has become a master of detached observation, but less of his patient than of his patient's tissues, fluids, and images as they can be studied by a variety of machines.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, as medicine began to rely more and more on the discoveries of science, a welcome change occurred in its ability to study disease in a systematic and rational way. The great model for medical researchers became the germ theory, promulgated through the work of Louis Pasteur, Joseph Lister and Robert Koch, in which the objective was to trace specific pathological entities to individual instigating factors. The notion of single causes was enormously productive, not only in understanding the origins and development of a sickness, but also as a beacon illuminating the direction in which proper therapies might be found. The general use of antibiotics introduced in the 1940s provided an idealized example of the way in which the accomplishments of the laboratory might be transferred to the bedside.

By then, X-rays were routine, methods of culturing bacteria were easily available, and much of the guesswork had been removed from the diagnosis of infectious disease. Reliance on detachment and objectivity in evaluating observations and data was increasingly proving to be the key to success in diagnosis and therapy in all aspects of medical care. Even when it gradually became obvious that understanding the progression of a disease might often require investigation of more than one factor, it was clear that the methods of biomedical science were the path toward that goal.

To this scientific orientation toward diagnosis and therapy, we owe the wonders of modern medicine. But the astonishing progress of recent decades has come with a price. Patients who are the beneficiaries of the best of the new medicine are at the same time victims of a paradox that exposes them to its worst: the very distancing so essential to the science of medicine has too often distanced the healers from their patients, from the *art* of medicine. In the meticulous and necessary attention paid to the bits and pieces of the sick, doctors have not frequently enough looked up to see the

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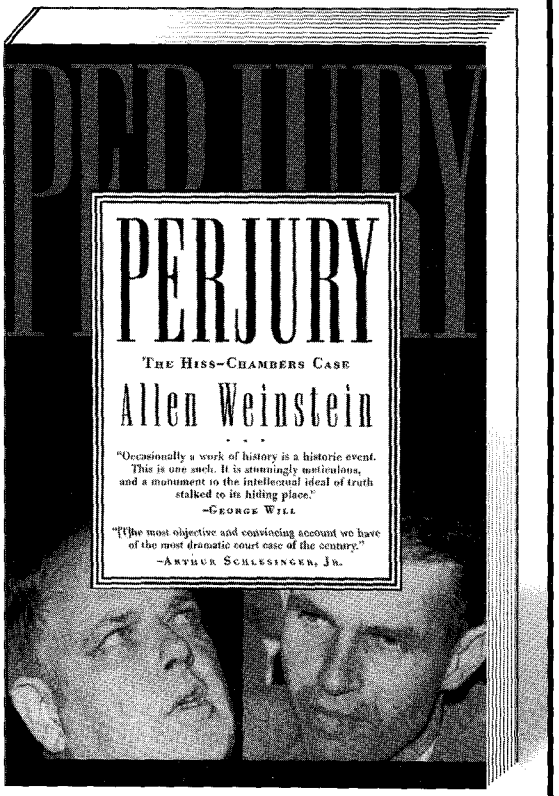
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entirety of the human being who needs help beyond the reversal of his pathology. The eyes brilliantly on the cure of disease are increasingly blind to the pleading eyes of illness.

Doctors today devote far more time and thought to the words of a pathologist or a radiologist (words that are often not even heard, but read off a computer screen) than to the words of the man or the woman for whose life they have taken responsibility. They are being trained to believe that they can help a suffering man more effectively by doing this than they can by trying to find out who he is; to believe that a woman's sickness cannot be best understood in the form of a narrative obtained through personal interaction with her, but only in the form of an algorithm obtained through impersonal interaction with the laboratory evidence of the pathology within her.

All of this leads back to the greatest challenge faced by contemporary Western doctors: the ever-widening gap between the profession of medicine and the calling of medicine; between the science of medicine and the art of medicine; between medicine's interest in treating disease and its interest in treating illness; between medicine's genius and medicine's humanity.

And it leads directly back also to the theme implicit in every page of *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, although its author does not raise that theme overtly until she has expertly woven together all the fascinating narrative threads in the story of a Hmong family's collision with the American system of medicine. The ordeal undergone by the Lees is a massively magnified version of what was experienced by my own Buonfiglios, Czarkowskis and Lefkowitzes; and yet it is such an extreme example of cultural misunderstanding that it may qualify as being unique. But then I remember the Gypsies, and the uniqueness of the Hmong seems a bit less.

Since the fall of Laos to the Communists in 1975, some 150,000 Hmong have fled that troubled land, and the great majority of them have settled in the United States, primarily in California and Minnesota. Their history is a long and tempestuous one, going back to what were probably prehistoric origins in Eurasia, a sojourn of several millennia in Siberia, and then their arrival in China in approximately 3,000 BCE, where in the course of time they chose to become a mountain people as a means of maintaining their independence. During their entire long sojourn in China, the Hmong never in any way intermingled with the indigenous population except when necessary, and fought hard to maintain their distinctness and sovereignty, "in hundreds of small and large revolts." This is the pattern that has characterized their dealings with every national group with which they have come into contact. Each of the many times their independence was threatened, the Hmong responded in one of two ways: they rose in bloody rebellion or fled elsewhere, always becoming farmers, as they had been since the earliest memory of any of their clans. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, half a million of them—having had their fill of Chinese repression—migrated to what are now Vietnam and Laos, with some later moving to Thailand.

In the 1960s the Laotian Hmong were sucked into the wars of their afflicted region by our CIA, which created its largest operation ever in the form of the Hmong Armée Clandestine, a secret guerrilla force of 30,000 soldiers, some of whom were taught to fly combat missions in spite of the absence of a written Hmong language or the ability to speak or read English. As always in their long and turbulent history, the Hmong fighters proved to be skilled and brutal, providing an effective surrogate army for the Americans, but at a huge cost to themselves in terms of massive casualties and the destruction of their villages. When the war ended in 1973, most Hmong families were transferred to temporary relocation sites.

In May 1975, the communist People's Democratic Republic displaced the 600-year-old Lao monarchy, and determined to exterminate the Hmong. Starving, decimated in numbers and might, with thousands of their ablest young men dead in combat, the ancient tribe had no choice but to flee. Foua and Nao Kao Lee were among the huge multitude of couples carrying their few possessions, the youngest of their children and even their elders on their backs, in the long caravan of survivors attempting to trek through the jungle to the safety of Thailand. Recaptured during their first attempt to flee in 1976, they were forced at gunpoint back to their village, which had become little more than a concentration camp. The family endured three more years of persecution before joining 400 other villagers in a second escape attempt in 1979. After twenty-six days of dodging the fire of Vietnamese and Laotian soldiers furiously doing everything they could to ambush them, they made their way across the Thai border, where they were taken to an overcrowded staging camp south of the Mekong River. On their arrival at such makeshift facilities, some 80 percent of refugees were found to be suffering from malnutrition and a variety of infections.

After a year spent in two refugee camps, the Lees were permitted to emigrate to the United States in December 1980. They lived briefly in Portland, Oregon before settling in Merced, California. By then, three of their thirteen children had died, victims of starvation and the dreadful conditions of the refugee facilities. The family arrived illiterate, unable to speak or to understand a word of English, and penniless. But they were Hmong, and determined not to be changed one iota by this latest of peoples among whom they would have to live. Unlike virtually every other immigrant group reaching our shores since the founding of the republic, they had no interest in becoming at all like us. As Fadiman tells us: "The Hmong came to the United States for the same reason they had left China in the nineteenth century: because they were trying to resist assimilation." Or, as more bluntly put by an anthropologist who had worked among them: "Those Hmong are really into being Hmong."

The new immigrants' appearance, behavior, customs, religion and life experience were unlike anything previously encountered by the Americans who met them, no matter how worldly or experienced they might be. Having survived the Laotians and the Vietnamese, the Hmong were not about to be intimidated by supermarkets, superhighways, or the super-efficient American medical system. And they were not about to be intimidated by those who would attempt to dilute their Hmong ethnicity. As Fadiman observes:

> The history of the Hmong yields several lessons that anyone who deals with them might do well to remember. Among the most obvious of these are that the Hmong do not like to take orders; that they do not like to lose; that they would rather flee, fight, or die than surrender; that they are not intimidated by being outnumbered; that they are rarely persuaded that the customs of other cultures, even those more powerful than their own, are superior; and that they are capable of getting very angry. Whether you find these traits infuriating or admirable depends largely on whether or not you are trying to make a Hmong do something he or she would prefer not to do. Those who have tried to defeat, deceive, govern, regulate, constrain, assimilate, intimidate, or patronize the Hmong have, as a rule, disliked them intensely.

Fadiman does not dislike the Hmong—far from it. She admires them not only for their capacity to love and their sense of family and clan loyalty, but also for the very characteristics that vex so many of those who have tried in vain to help them by providing all the benefits

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of our advanced and highly technologized civilization. As for the Lees themselves, her feelings for them go well beyond admiration. There is no doubt that what she came to feel for them during their eight years of mutual observation and friendship is love, in the natural and easy way that admiration grows into something greater when common values are discovered beneath the carapace of culture, and another's humanity can be seen to glow through the veil of social differences that obscures what binds us to one another.

The origin of Fadiman's affection for the Hmong is an event that occurred on July 19, 1982, six years before she met them. On the morning of that day, Foua Lee, whose age was estimated to be anywhere between 38 and 55, gave birth for the fourteenth time, to the first of her children to be born not only in America but in a hospital. The child, named Lia, seemed normal in every way until she was three months old, when she had the first of what would be many epileptic seizures, a condition called in the Hmong language *quag dab peg*, literally "the spirit catches you and you fall down." The Hmong believe that such a convulsion occurs when a bad spirit, called a *dab*, strikes a person so hard that her soul leaves her body. In such cases, the proper course is to call in a *txiv neeb*, "a person with a healing spirit." A *txiv neeb* is a kind of medicine man, a shaman who by a complex healing ceremony involving animal sacrifice, prayer, holy water, the invoking of a trancelike state and even the ritual of simulated horseback riding, can retrieve the soul.

And yet Foua and Nao Kao had mixed feelings about their little girl's seizure. As it has in many cultures, including that of our own cultural forebears in ancient Greece, epilepsy signifies to the Hmong that there is something special about its victim. It may even mean that he or she has been chosen to be the host of a *neeb*, or healing spirit. There is consequently a certain reluctance to be totally freed of such a possibility. But when Lia experienced at least twenty seizures in the next few months, her parents, having had a few somewhat satisfactory experiences with Western medicine in the camps, several times carried her the three blocks from their apartment to the Merced Community Medical Center, a public hospital staffed in part by the trainees and faculty of the Family Practice Residency of the University of California at Davis. To Foua and Nao Kao, Lia's symptoms were being caused by soul loss; to the doctors, "they were caused by an electrochemical storm inside their daughter's head that had been stirred up by the

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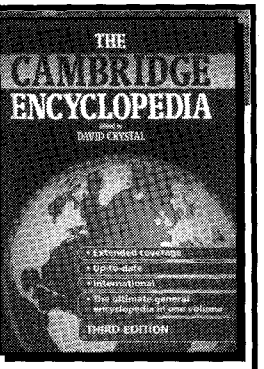

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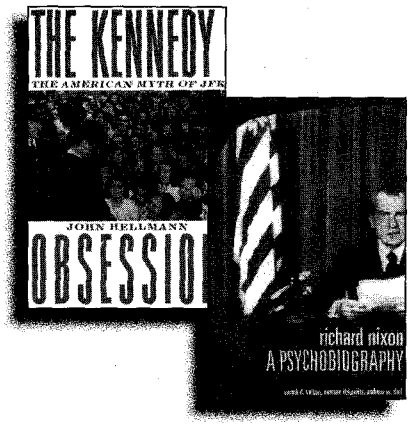

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misfiring of aberrant brain cells."

And so the misunderstandings began. For the next four years, through one seizure after another, fifteen hospitalizations, more than a hundred trips to the emergency room and outpatient clinic, and untold numbers of nursing visits to the home, the basis of Lia's illness and the proper course of treatment were constant sources of friction, and of overt clashes, between the Lees and the medical staff at Merced. The two physicians most directly responsible for her care were the wife and husband team of Peggy Philp and Neil Ernst, two of the finest (some say *the* finest) doctors in the hospital. "Neil 'n Peggy know everything and they never make mistakes. They are perfect. If we ever had problems all we had to do was call Neil 'n Peggy and they would figure it out," say two younger physicians who trained under them.

> Neil 'n Peggy are controlled, Neil especially, almost to a fault. I have even heard him say, about getting angry or crying, that he just doesn't feel comfortable doing things like that. But that doesn't mean he isn't compassionate. He prides himself on establishing a good rapport with his clinic patients, including some very difficult ones, some Spanish speaking, and most patients accept what he and Peggy say as gospel and do whatever they say. Few other people I know would have gone to the lengths they did to provide good medical care to Lia. They were always thinking about her. Whenever they had to go away, they'd tell all the residents, "Now if this little fat Hmong girl comes in seizing. . . . "

Through all the changes in medication, it was never possible to know how much the child was actually receiving unless samples of her blood were tested, because her parents varied the doses on their own, often as a result of having decided—on the basis of religious criteria inscrutable to the doctors—that the treatment was harming her, and actually causing the seizures they were meant to prevent. She had many convulsive episodes that would have been avoided were she being given the prescribed amounts of medicine. And at the basis of the Lees' disagreements with Lia's doctors was the fundamental element that differentiates so-called traditional medicine from its modern scientific counterpart. As Fadiman sees it, "the Hmong view of health care seemed to me to be precisely the opposite of the prevailing American one, in which the practice of medicine has fissioned into smaller and smaller subspecialties, with less and less truck between bailiwicks. The Hmong carried holism to its ultima Thule."

The conflict is hundreds of years old. The approach of science is to separate every problem into each of its smallest constituent factors and then to study that factor in isolation, in order to avoid surrounding influences that might alter the conditions in which it operates. Such methods are the basis upon which have been built the wondrous achievements of the scientific enterprise, including that portion of it which has come to be called biomedicine. But the foundations of virtually every system of traditional medicine are fashioned on the principle that in the real world of nature everything is a part of everything else and affects everything else—nothing can be understood in isolation from the very influences that a scientist tries to avoid in his researches.

Actually, no conflict should exist. The individual phenomena of nature can best be studied by the principles of science, but the findings of the scientific method are best applied at the bedside by utilizing the realization that a human being is an instance of the holistic interaction. Up to a point, physicians understand this, teach it and build their treatments on it, to the extent that they do see individual biological systems—like the biological system that is the human body—as wholes in which all parts influence all other parts. And yet the continuity and the unity of the body with all of nature, so much a part of traditional medicine, has been to a great degree neglected and underinvestigated, and sometimes even scoffed at, by the finest physicians. Even the influence of the mind on illness (and, as we should know so well, on disease) has received shorter shrift than it deserves. When faced with a code of belief based entirely on unproven factors considered not subjectable to the methods of science, modern physicians too often respond with rejection of the entire set of premises on which the code is based. Ironically, the one exception is prayer, as long as the prayer is consistent with the religion of an individual physician of faith. Religious American physicians see no inconsistency in such a stance

Instead of appreciating that the differing perceptions of scientific and traditional medicine have something to offer each other, their respective proponents too often behave like the Lees and their daughter's doctors. Each tries to undo the other's intentions. It is understandable that the Hmong would be confused and mystified by scientific medicine, but there is really no reason why an American doctor should not be able to take into account the traditional beliefs of his patients. Fadiman outlines the problem as it applies to the Hmong. Of the doctors treating Lia, she says:

> They could hardly be expected to "respect" their patients' system of health beliefs (if indeed they ever had the time and the inter-

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preters to find out what it was), since the medical schools they had attended had never informed them that diseases are caused by fugitive souls and cured by jugulated chickens ... [N]one of them had had a single hour of cross-cultural medicine. To most of them, the Hmong taboos against blood tests, spinal taps, surgery, anesthesia, and autopsies—the basic tools of modern medicine—seemed like self-defeating ignorance. They had no way of knowing that a Hmong might regard these taboos as the sacred guardians of his identity, indeed, quite literally, of his very soul. What the doctors viewed as clinical efficiency the Hmong viewed as frosty arrogance.

As Lia's chart grew to five volumes, weighing a total of almost fourteen pounds, one entry after another detailed the parents' resistance to the best efforts of the medical and nursing staff. When the Lees dug in their heels more deeply, so did the doctors—not only Neil and Peggy, but almost everyone else as well. Here and there an understanding nurse or social worker came on the scene, but for the most part it was the Lees against the American world. At one point, it became necessary to use legal means to take the child from her parents and place her in foster care for an extended period. The Hmong are well known for the affection that they shower on their children, and Lia was the favorite, the little queen, of the household. For Foua and Nao Kao, it was a crushing blow to be separated from her. Not only had their adored daughter been wrenched forcefully from them, but the authorities had brought shame on the family by declaring them unfit to take care of her.

Late one night, Foua tried to explain to Fadiman what soul loss means to the Hmong. Through an interpreter, she said: "Your soul is like your shadow. Sometimes it just wanders off like a butterfly and that is when you are sad and that's when you get sick, and if it comes back to you, that is when you are happy and you are well again." To this Nao Kao added that "sometimes the soul goes away but the doctors don't believe it. I would like you to tell the doctors to believe in our *neeb*." (The word *neeb*, or healing spirit, is often used as shorthand for *ua neeb kho*, the shamanic ritual, performed by a *txiv neeb*, in which an animal is sacrificed and its soul bartered for the vagrant soul of a sick person.) "The doctors can fix some sicknesses that involve the body and blood, but for us Hmong, some people get sick because of their soul, so they need spiritual things. With Lia it was good to do a little medicine and a little *neeb*, but not too much medicine because the medicine cuts the *neeb*'s effect. If we did a little of each she didn't get sick as much, but the doctors

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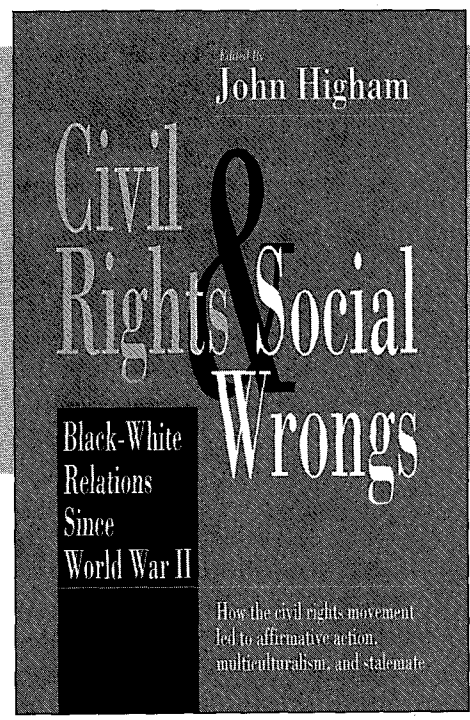
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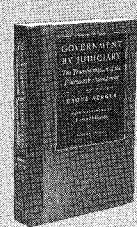

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wouldn't let us give just a little medicine because they didn't understand about the soul."

The doctors didn't understand about the soul and the Hmong didn't understand about the body. That was the cause of the impasse that ultimately led to tragedy. The seizures began to worsen, and everyone grew more worried. Neil prophesied the eventual outcome when he told the Lees that, if the trend continued unchanged, he feared Lia might have an episode he would not be able to stop. And that is precisely what happened. On November 25, 1987, she went into a prolonged convulsion called status epilepticus, a state of continuous seizure that did not come under control for two hours. When it was over, she was transferred by speeding ambulance to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at Valley Children's Hospital in Fresno. She arrived seventy minutes after her departure from Merced, having begun another episode of status epilepticus on the way, and with a fever of almost 105. By the time everything was brought under control, there was no longer any electrical activity in the cortex of Lia's brain. She would exist for the rest of her life in a persistent vegetative state.

When Fadiman met the Lees in 1988, Lia was almost seven years old, and had been incapable of purposeful movement for two years, kept alive only by the autonomous functioning of her brain stem. She had no conscious mental activity. Her seizures had not recurred because the motor cortex was dead. And yet she remained the central focus of the family's activities. They spoke and crooned to her as if they had the expectation that her soul would one day return, and they were scrupulous in the care of her body. Now that there were no anti-convulsants or other important medicines to give, Foua and Nao Kao became the perfect caregivers. In their own eyes, they had always filled this role. Now they began to be seen by the doctors in the same way.

During this time, Lia's contact with Merced's medical establishment was through a yearly clinic visit and checkups by the visiting public health nurse, which would gradually dwindle down to one about every four months. But her contact with the Hmong medical establishment continued to be close. She was fed special foods, and given tea made from powdered roots and herbs, some of which her parents bought at a Hmong-owned market and some of which they grew in the parking lot behind their building. When they could afford it, about twice a year, a *txiv neeb* came to their apartment to perform a ritual pig sacrifice.

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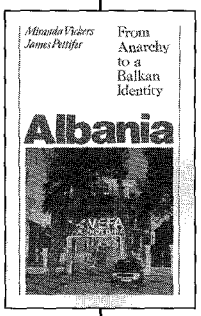
It is with one of these ancient ceremonies that Fadiman closes her book. Its last words are the chanted verses of the *txiv neeb* as he rides furiously fast on his simulated horse, in a deep trance and headed for the skies to try to retrieve Lia's soul: "Come home through this door," he implores it. "Come home to your family—come home, come home, come home, come home, come home, come home." Lia's soul never came home, but neither did the child die. In their own way, her parents have found solace in her life, and have continued to love and care for her as though she were vibrantly healthy, or perhaps as though with a certainty that her soul will yet return. And then their beloved daughter will be as before.

Beginning with her first meeting with the Lees in 1988, Fadiman spent thousands of hours with them, and hundreds more with the wide spectrum of professionals who were involved in Lia's care; she seems to have reviewed each page of Lia's 400,000-word hospital chart with Peggy Philp and Neil Ernst; she has tracked down every possible datum and bit of background information that she thought might explain any aspect of the impasse between the family and the powerful establishment of medicine, law, and government that they believed was arrayed against them; she has studied the history of the Hmong and the culture of Western medical care, and developed a deep understanding of both; she has sought out experts in every area of concern, while at the same time scouring the literature of medicine and sociology, seeking overt information and abstruse clues; she has counselled with herself and with others, and thought long and hard about the whys and the what ifs. The result is a profoundly memorable book.

This is a book that should be deeply disturbing to anyone who has given so much as a moment's thought to the state of American medicine. But it is much more. One senses rather early in Fadiman's narrative that within a short time of becoming well acquainted with the Lees, Fadiman's journey became a personal one, gradually moving far beyond the mere retrospective investigation of an unfolding sociological event. She did not hesitate to allow herself an emotional closeness not only with the Lees and several other of the Hmong she came to know so intimately, but also with their caregivers as well. She let them enter her life, which is probably why they let her enter theirs.

There are no villains in Fadiman's tale, just as there are no heroes. People are presented as she saw them, in their humility and their frailty—and their nobility. I cannot think of a book by a non-physician that is more understanding of the difficulties of caring for people such as the Lees, or of the conditions under which today's medicine is practiced. The empathy that physicians are urged to give is here given to them, no less than to the Hmong. Moreover, Fadiman grasps and recreates the atmosphere of emergency situations far more vividly than such things have ever been portrayed on film. Medical readers will recognize these scenes and these people because they have taken part in them and seen them. Others will intuitively recognize their truth.

But a reader's greatest appreciation of this book must be for its larger message, which applies to the entire edifice of Western medicine: modern medical treatment cures disease, but for illness a little *neeb* goes a long way. Know thyselves, Fadiman is telling us. You are excellent physicians, but imperfect healers. Perhaps we doctors are the ones who might benefit from the ritual of a *txiv neeb*, so that we might call out after the part of our profession's soul that has been captured by the regime of essential but unfeeling science, and beseech it to "come home, come home, come home." •



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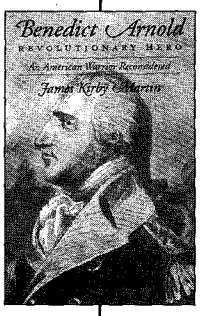

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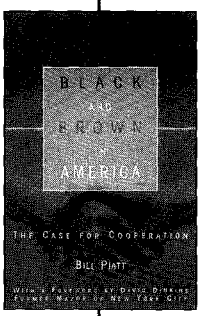

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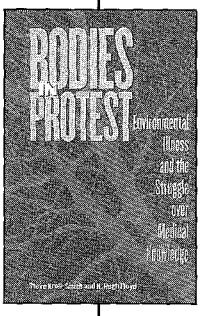

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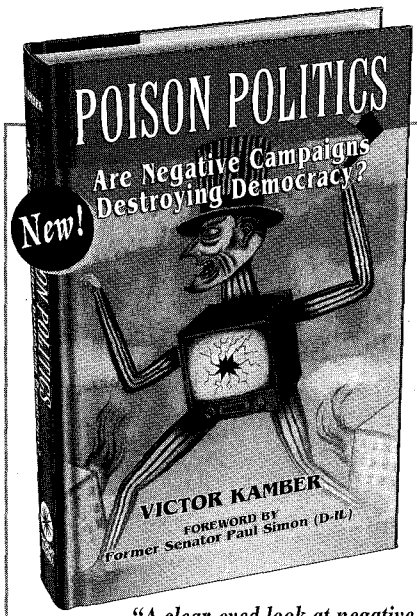

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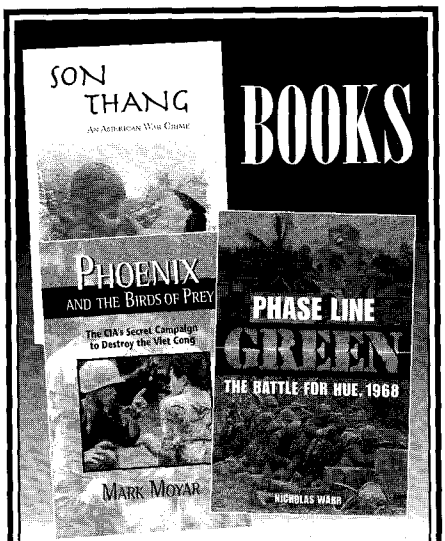

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The Skin Trade

BY RICHARD A. POSNER

Beyond All Reason: The Radical Assault on Truth in American Law by Daniel A. Farber and Suzanna Sherry

(Oxford University Press, 195 pp., $25)

The postmodern left is defined by its opposition to the values, the beliefs, and the culture of the "West," the "West" being conceived as the domain of nondisabled heterosexual white males of European extraction and their east Asian and west Asian "imitators," such as the Japanese (Hitler's "honorary Aryans") and the Jews. The postmodern left is radically multiculturalist, but it is more, for the "West" that it denigrates is not historically specific; it encompasses liberalism, capitalism, individualism, the Enlightenment, logic, and science, the values associated with the Judeo-Christian tradition, the concept of personal merit, and the possibility of objective knowledge.

The postmodern left provides an intellectual framework for "identity politics." Having demolished to its satisfaction universal values and criteria, it has cleared the way for the claim that the most important thing about a person is his or her race, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, and degree of physical or mental disability (what else is there?); and that good jobs and the other rewards of social life should be distributed across groups in proportion to their fraction of the population, except that women are entitled to live longer than men and blacks to dominate professional basketball. For if there is no such thing as individual merit—if "merit" is just the preference for your own kind—the only fair way to allocate goods is randomly, and this will tend to produce an allocation proportional to the relative size of groups. If 12 percent of the population of the United States is black, then 12 percent of the professors at the Harvard Law School should be black, and half of those blacks should be women, and so it is a scandal that there are no black women on the Harvard Law School faculty.

The example is not chosen at random. The postmodern left is well ensconced in American universities, and even has a foothold in the law schools, where professors of critical race theory, such as Derrick Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Jerome Culp, Richard Delgado, Alex Johnson, Mari Matsuda and Patricia Williams, hold forth. It is these professors—along with radical legal feminists such as Kathryn Abrams, Catharine MacKinnon, and Robin West, and the fast-fading adherents of critical legal studies—who are the particular target of *Beyond All Reason.* Written by two respected law professors at the University of Minnesota, the book classifies critical race theory, radical legal feminism, and critical legal studies under the rubric of "radical multiculturalism," and it subjects to courteous but relentless criticism this "paranoid mode of thought that sees behind every social institution nothing but the tracks of white supremacy and male oppression." The term "radical multiculturalism" is not entirely apt; it is too narrow for what Daniel A. Farber and Suzanna Sherry are talking about and, since it is not limited to law, also too broad. A better term, less suggestive of merely racial and ethnic concerns and more precise about academic affiliation, would be "radical legal egalitarianism."

Every intellectual movement has a lunatic fringe. Radical legal egalitarianism is distinguished by having a rational fringe and a lunatic core. The latter is constituted by the critical race theorists and the other legal academics who have swallowed postmodernism hook, line, and sinker, such as Ann Scales, who declares that "objective reality is a myth," adding inconsistently that "the physics of relativity and quantum mechanics demonstrate that nature is on our side." The fringe consists of the postmodernist thinkers, such as Michel Foucault and Stanley Fish, who created the intellectual framework within which the radical legal egalitarians operate, and of the ablest legal radicals, such as Duncan Kennedy and Catharine MacKinnon.

The scholars of the rational fringe are rational mainly by contrast to the core. They have plenty of goofy ideas and irresponsible dicta. Just read Kennedy on

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legal education or MacKinnon on pornography and rape, or for that matter on science: "our critique of the objective standpoint as male is a critique of science as a specifically male approach to knowledge. With it, we reject male criteria for verification." MacKinnon does not consider herself a postmodernist—she has sharply criticized the postmodernist left—but Farber and Sherry are trying to trace the postmodernist virus in all its legal hosts, even those who have not succumbed completely. Maybe they overdo it; despite the lack of qualification in the passage that they quote from MacKinnon, it is apparent from the context that she is talking only about social science, and her rejection of radical skepticism comes only three pages after the passage that Farber and Sherry quote.

But the critical race theorists have succumbed completely to postmodernist absurdity, and so they provide the biggest target for Farber and Sherry's attack and receive the largest number of arrows. In the case of critical race theory, however, criticism is almost secondary. One has only to illuminate the target. The most useful service that *Beyond All Reason* performs is to cull from the extensive publications of the critical race theorists representative statements, such as that "racism and enlightenment are the same thing," or that "if you are black or Mexican, you should flee Enlightenment-based democracies like mad, assuming you have any choice." Flee to where, I wonder? The same article identifies "democracy" as the "mechanism" that accounts for "black subordination and the maintenance of a racist regime." The author is Richard Delgado, who claims to be a member of, and a spokesman for, a group that he calls "people of color." The group seems to be more a state of mind than a race. I have met Professor Delgado. He is as pale as I am, has sharply etched features in a long face, speaks unaccented English, and, for all that appears upon casual acquaintance, could be a direct descendant of Ferdinand and Isabella. He lives and teaches, contentedly so far as I know, in an "Enlightenment-based democracy," namely the United States.

Delgado's whiteness lends an Evelyn Waugh touch to critical race theory. But that theory is not primarily comical, and in fact it has an ugly streak. Its practitioners attack conservative blacks as white men with black faces (or as slaves "willing to mimic the masters' views," which is Derrick Bell's description of Clarence Thomas). They attack white radicals as interlopers in a domain reserved for nonwhites: Delgado has written that whites should not write about civil rights,

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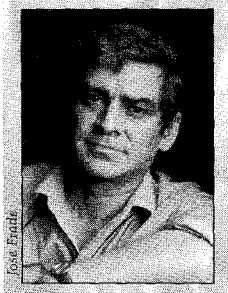

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but should leave the field to people of color, such as himself. When white radicals fail to go all the way with the most radical of critical race theorists, the critical race theorists turn on them, calling them racists. In an article published too late to be cited in Farber and Sherry's book, Delgado compares an article by the radical feminist Jane Larson to *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the Supreme Court's "separate but equal" opinion. Larson's article denounces the working conditions of Mexican-Americans in a district in Texas that seems a throwback to feudalism, but she points out that if the full panoply of worker-protective laws, such as the minimum wage, were to be suddenly extended to these workers, many of them would lose their jobs. For this concession to reality, she is accused of racism.

In the most original chapter of their book, Farber and Sherry expose what they consider to be the latent anti-Semitism of critical race theory. Law professors with little to say about the law itself, critical race theorists are particularly concerned about the underrepresentation of blacks and Hispanics in American law faculties. As is well known (and extensively documented in *Beyond All Reason*), Jews are heavily overrepresented on these faculties, as they are on university faculties generally. Jews, like east Asians, have a very strong ethic of success through education. Jews in particular have an affinity for law, and for academic law: they are less than 2.5 percent of the population, but they constitute 50 percent of the faculty at a number of the leading law schools. A central thesis of critical race theory is that success in America is undeserved; and it follows that the most undeserving, because they are relatively the most successful, among law professors at any rate, are Jews. Thus they are occupying places in law schools that belong of right to blacks and Hispanics.

The success of Jews and of Asians, moreover, is a triumph of individualism and meritocracy, since neither group got where they are through identity politics, claiming a share of good jobs equal to their fraction of the population, though there has been a bit of affirmative action for Asians. To be for identity politics is to be against the social and political conditions that have enabled Jews, Asians, Mormons, West Indians and other minorities (including homosexuals, in the face of continuing official discrimination)—including even Mexican-Americans, charter members of Delgado's populace of color—to advance. It is even to be against successful blacks, since they must have "sold out" to get where they are.

Still, I would not call this anti-Semitism. To do so is to make the same mistake that critical race theorists make when they call anyone who opposes special privileges for minorities a racist. Farber and Sherry say that any political theory that "implies that Jews have unjustly taken more than their fairly earned share should be rejected" because of its anti-Semitic implications. By parity of reasoning, any theory which implies that affirmative action has resulted in minorities taking more than their fairly earned share should be rejected as racist. Yet that is the very theory—that of the allocation of goods on the basis of individual merit—that this book propounds! Perhaps we have all been infected by the postmodernist virus. Farber and Sherry announce that they themselves are Jewish. By their own lights, however, this is as irrelevant as, though it is more plausible than, Delgado's announcing himself a person of color. If Jews get to define anti-Semitism, then blacks get to define racism. But Farber's and Sherry's whole point is that arguments can be evaluated objectively by the use of criteria that transcend group identity, that are "observer independent."

I do not think that the critical race theorists are anti-Semites. The hallmark of an anti-Semite is to be preoccupied with Jews. The critical race theorists, unlike Louis Farrakhan and some of his followers, are not preoccupied with Jews; they are not even interested in Jews, who for them are part of an undifferentiated mass of white oppressors. This position, lumping Jews in with the other whites of America, may be insensitive; but insensitivity is not hostility.

What is most arresting about critical race theory is that, as Farber and Sherry amply document, it turns its back on the Western tradition of rational inquiry, forswearing analysis for narrative. Rather than marshal logical arguments and empirical data, critical race theorists tell stories—fictional, science-fictional, quasi-fictional, autobiographical, anecdotal—designed to expose the pervasive and debilitating racism of America today. By repudiating reasoned argumentation, the storytellers reinforce stereotypes about the intellectual capacities of nonwhites. By claiming to speak in the "Voice of Color," critical race theorists exaggerate the difficulty of interracial discussion of social issues and discourage such discussion. By depicting the telling of stories as the characteristic method of nonwhites' "reasoning," critical race theorists do their clientele the same disservice that Amartya Sen has analyzed in these pages and elsewhere, when he points to the strong rational tradition in Indian and Confucian thought and deplores the tendency to associate Asians with mysticism. The reinforcement by the critical race theorists of traditional stereotypes about blacks is all the greater because these theorists are not talented storytellers, with the exception of Patricia Williams. Since they do not have literary skills, they cannot excuse their turn to narrative by claiming merely to be better storytellers than analysts.

The ironic consequence is that the critical race theorists are poor role models. Instead of exemplifying in their careers the potential of members of their groups for respected achievement in the world outside the ghetto of complaint—the kind of exemplification that we find in the career of Colin Powell—critical race theorists teach by example that the role of a member of a minority group is to be paid a comfortable professional salary to write childish stories about how awful it is to be a member of such a group.

I do not doubt the power of literature to awaken readers to injustice. But the stories told by the critical race theorists do not rise to the level of literature. They are flops as stories and, as Farber and Sherry demonstrate, flops as scholarship. For one thing, the authors of these stories frequently equivocate about their truth content. With Derrick Bell, at least you know that he is writing science fiction, not science; but with the other storytellers you often don't know whether they are writing fact or fiction—especially since they do not consider this a meaningful distinction. Alex Johnson says that "it is perfectly acceptable ... if that which is presented as the truth turns out not to be objectively true..." In other words, truth doesn't matter, even if it can be said to exist. Patricia Williams doesn't think it matters whether Tawana Brawley was lying or telling the truth about being the victim of a racist assault (it was the former): she was "the victim of some unspeakable crime. No matter who did it to her—and even if she did it to herself." By parity of reasoning, it doesn't matter whether Alfred Dreyfus was innocent; the French right wing must have been fearfully upset about *something* to have believed him guilty, and that's all that should matter. Williams is the best writer in the group, but she is also one of the most credulous. In her book *The Alchemy of Race and Rights*, she accepts one of the linchpins of loony Afrocentrism, the claim that Beethoven was black.

Even when stories are true, they are not a reliable basis for generalization. So it is not surprising that the critical race

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theorists are deeply misinformed about the actual situation of the groups about whom they write. They claim that law schools discriminate against black women in faculty hiring. In fact, as Farber and Sherry show, a black female lawyer (also a black male lawyer) has a better chance of being hired for a law school faculty than a white male lawyer. Universities discriminate, all right; but they discriminate in favor of blacks, Hispanics, and women, and against white males. Since blacks and women are traditionally subordinated groups, the critical race theorists believe that the situation of black women must be worse than that of black men. That is not true. Judged by income, employment, longevity, or rates of criminal victimization and incarceration, black women are much better off than black men. Critical race theorists are likewise wrong when they claim that the situation of blacks in the United States is worse today than it has been at any time since slavery was abolished. It is much better today, for most though not all blacks, than it was in the days of lynching, apartheid, and rampant discrimination in employment and public accommodations, which is to say, as recently as the 1940s and 1950s.

Critical race theorists are terrible lumpers. Black men and black women are not similarly situated. Blacks and Hispanics are not similarly situated either. Welfare dependence, violence, family disintegration, poverty, lack of business entrepreneurship, proclivity for public over private employment, and diehard loyalty to the Democratic Party are far more common among blacks than among Hispanics, who are coming to resemble—politically, socially, and economically—central and eastern European ethnics. Richard Delgado has nothing in common with a drug pusher in Harlem or a teenage mom in South Central. Minorities have little in common not only with each other but also with women, with homosexuals, with the disabled. The critical race theorists speak for a sliver of the black intelligentsia and a few university radicals; they do not speak for, or to, an oppressed class of Americans.

By exaggerating the plight of the groups for which they are the self-appointed spokesmen, the critical race theorists come across as whiners and wolf-criers. By forswearing analysis in favor of storytelling, they come across as labile and intellectually limited. By embracing the politics of identity, they come across as divisive. Their grasp of social reality is weak; their diagnoses are inaccurate; their suggested cures (rigid quotas, 1960s-style demonstrations, transformations of the American spirit, socialism, poverty law practice) are tried and true failures. Their lodgment in the law schools is a disgrace to legal education, which lacks the moral courage and the intellectual self-confidence to pronounce a minority movement's scholarship bunk. To be sure, it is not a unique embarrassment; there is plenty of shoddy legal scholarship. But this is hardly an excuse for the extremism, the paranoia, the hysteria, and the irrationalism of critical race theory, which are embarrassments to sober liberal egalitarians, such as Farber and Sherry, and obstacles to solving the problems created by the nation's racial and ethnic variety.

I think that *Beyond All Reason* would have been an even stronger book if Farber and Sherry had not played the Jewish victim card, and if they had confined their attention entirely to the critical race theorists, who have gotten a free ride for too long because they have wrapped themselves in the mantle of race. Still, this is a fine book, a work of intelligence and courage that will alter the terms of debate in academic law. And, oddly, it may save critical race theory. White scholars have largely ignored this movement. This has been no favor to it. Criticism is the oxygen of a scholarly movement. Race relations are a serious American social and legal problem; and minority legal scholars who have decided to devote their professional lives to the consideration of this problem should be able to contribute to its solution. If it is read by them in the right spirit, *Beyond All Reason* may help them to reorient critical race theory in a constructive, and genuinely scholarly, direction.

RICHARD A. POSNER is Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit and Senior Lecturer at the University of Chicago Law School.

War and Fleece

BY BERNARD KNOX

The Argonautika:
The Story of Jason and the Quest for the Golden Fleece
by Apollonios Rhodios
translated with introduction, commentary and glossary
by Peter Green

(University of California Press, 480 pp., $60)

Most literate members of the English-speaking community have come to know the story of the good ship Argo, of Jason, Medea, and the Golden Fleece, in their childhood, from reading (or better still, from hearing a parent read) Andrew Lang's *Tales of Troy and Greece*, or the more sanitized version of Hawthorne in *Tanglewood Tales*. But few besides scholars have read the Alexandrian Greek poem, the *Argonautika* of Apollonius of Rhodes, which is the fullest and most powerful account of Jason's quest that has come down to us from the ancient world. The reason is not far to seek. Few English translations are available, and they are in prose. Richard Hunter's spirited version of 1992 is a signal advance on E.V. Rieu's pedestrian Penguin translation of 1959, but it is condemned to wage a losing battle against great odds. A prose translation of Homer's *Odyssey*, even in the artificial Biblicalese of Butcher and Lang (1879), can still sweep the reader along because of the speed, vigor and surface simplicity of Homeric narrative, but the *Argonautika* is another matter.

Apollonius is a learned and sophisticated poet, and these qualities are manifested, in Hunter's words, "in a dense texture of allusion to earlier literature ... a preference for unusual or recondite myths ... an interest in the origins of cities, cults and rituals ... and reflections of contemporary debate and scholarship ... ," not to mention a penchant for ethnographic and mythological digressions. His matter and his treatment of it need the help of the Muses, on whom he calls, early in the poem, to inspire his song; and only a verse translation can hope to maintain the reader's engagement with this elaborate, discursive reworking of one of the oldest Greek myths: the Argo's voyage to the fabulous East, the love story of Jason and Medea,

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and the even longer voyage home (based on faulty geography) along the Danube, the Po and the Rhone, with a most unwelcome detour through Libya.

In Peter Green, Apollonius has found the ideal translator and editor. Green's credentials in poetic translation are impressive: the stunningly witty version of Ovid's elegiac couplets in *The Erotic Poems* (1982), a volume followed by the sadder *Poems of Exile* (1994), and preceded by the hexameters of Juvenal's *Satires* (1967). All three of these books contain, besides the verse translation, a brilliant and informative introduction as well as a full commentary which, besides elucidating references and allusions for the illatinate reader, also commands the attention of scholars by its forceful and sometimes controversial interpretation. Green's *Argonautika* follows the same pattern. In this case, the very full commentary breaks fresh ground. Though there have been several scholarly editions of Book III (which features Medea and the winning of the Fleece), there has been no commentary on the whole poem published since what Green rightly dismisses as "the outdated text of Mooney" in 1912, which was "fundamentally inadequate even when written."

Green's introduction—as was to be expected from the author of *Alexander to Actium* (1990), a magisterial study of the three centuries of the Hellenistic world—is a fascinating recreation of the context of Apollonius's life and work, which, typically, presents some lively criticisms of *idées reçues*. He has also provided a full glossary of proper names and places which will give the curious (or baffled) reader all the information that he or she needs on the hundreds of mythical characters in the poem, including their often important family relationships.

This translation uses the "long, loose, 5/6-beat stress line developed by Day Lewis and Lattimore" (for, respectively, the *Aeneid* and the *Iliad*). Green is as adept in his use of this line as he was in his equivalent for Ovid's elegiac couplet. Witness his version of the first meeting of Jason and Medea, who has already fallen deeply in love on her first sight of him the day before.

> ... his coming started the ill-starred
> miseries of passion.
> The heart dropped out of her breast, of
> their own accord
> her eyes misted over, a warm blush mantled
> her cheeks.
> Her knees she lacked strength to shift,
> forward or backward,
> while her feet were nailed to the ground.
> Her attendants meanwhile
> had all retired to a distance, away from
> them both.
> Silent and speechless the two were left
> face to face
> like oaks or tall pine trees, side by side in
> the mountains
> standing deep-rooted and quiet, while a
> calm
> stillness prevails, but then a breeze
> comes blowing
> and stirs them to endless murmuring
> converse: so these two,
> stirred by the winds of love, would talk
> to one another.

And here is a famous description of Medea's state of mind as, in the night before this meeting, she both yearns and fears for Jason:

> Close and quick now beat the heart in her
> bosom,
> as a shaft of sunlight will dance along
> the house wall
> when flung up from water new-poured into
> pail or cauldron:
> hither and thither the swiftly circling
> ripples
> send it darting, a *frisson* of
> brightness; in just such a way
> her virgin heart now beat a tattoo on her
> ribs,
> her eyes shed tears of pity, constant
> anguish
> ran smoldering through her flesh,
> hot-wired her finespun
> nerve ends, needled into the skull's base,
> the deep spinal
> cord where pain pierces sharpest when the
> unresting
> passions inject their agony into the
> senses.

This passage is remarkable for the originality and the charm of the simile, but also for what Green calls "an unmistakable, almost clinical description—the earliest known to me in European literature—of the onset and development of a migraine." Apollonius is drawing on the medical theories of contemporary Alexandrian physicians who had discovered "the connection between the brain, the nervous system, and bodily sensation." Apollonius may be following, in meter, epic dialect and length, in the footsteps of Homer, but he is resolute in his intention to "make it new."

This was the problem facing all Alexandrian poets. They were heirs to a great, even overwhelming, legacy: the prodigious literary achievement of the Greek city-states of the eighth to the fourth centuries B.C. Most of them were scholars, and two of them, Callimachus and Apollonius, worked in the great Alexandrian Library, Callimachus as the creator of its catalog and Apollonius, later, as its director. But the Library was not only a stupendous collection of books. It was also, as its Greek name *Mouseion* implies, a cultural center, where writers of all kinds—poets, historians, literary editors, scientists—pursued their careers with accommodations, communal meals, and a stipend provided by the royal patron. It was a literary-scientific think tank where, in the words of a certain Timon (a satiric poet who may have been venting his spleen at not being invited) "a bunch of bookish inmates spends endless time on mutual denunciation in the Muses' birdcage."

For the poets of the *Mouseion*, whose great predecessors had produced unchallengeable masterpieces in epic, lyric and dramatic poetry, making it new was a formidable enterprise. One option was to create new literary forms: the *epyllion*, for example, or "miniature epic"—a short, highly wrought, descriptive narrative, often dealing with a single incident in the life of a hero, or presenting a dialogue between shepherds as in the pastoral idylls of Theocritus. Or they could put an old form to new uses. The epigram, once a short elegiac inscription for a tomb, was used for social comment, love poems, personal invective, imaginary dedications and satiric wit.

When the larger ancient forms were used—say, hymns to the Olympian gods—the tone of the poem was unmistakably new. The Homeric Hymn to Demeter (sixth century B.C.) is a fascinating narrative, a tale simply told, but every line is infused with a deep religious reverence; but Callimachus's hymn to the same goddess, though it uses the Homeric meter and the customary invocation of the divinity, is a horse of a different color. For the classic myth of Persephone's abduction by Hades and Demeter's search through the world for her daughter, Callimachus substitutes a myth that has grotesque and macabre features, all of which he exploits to the full.

It is the tale of Erisychthon, whom Demeter punished for cutting down a poplar tree in her sacred grove to use as a beam in his banquet hall. She inflicted on him an insatiable appetite, which devours all the resources of his parents; he eats even "the racehorse and the war horse and the white-tailed creature that frightens the small animals" and ends up begging for crusts in the streets. "Comic, tragic, mimetic and lyrical elements," so writes the poem's most recent editor, "the striking transposition of modern, 'bourgeois' morality into an archaic setting ... the interplay between numerous literary borrowings and their original contexts, constant reference to matters of philological interest—all these features represent a new type of poetry. ... "

Apollonius was Callimachus's pupil, and was as much an "Alexandrian" poet as his master. But with a significant dif-

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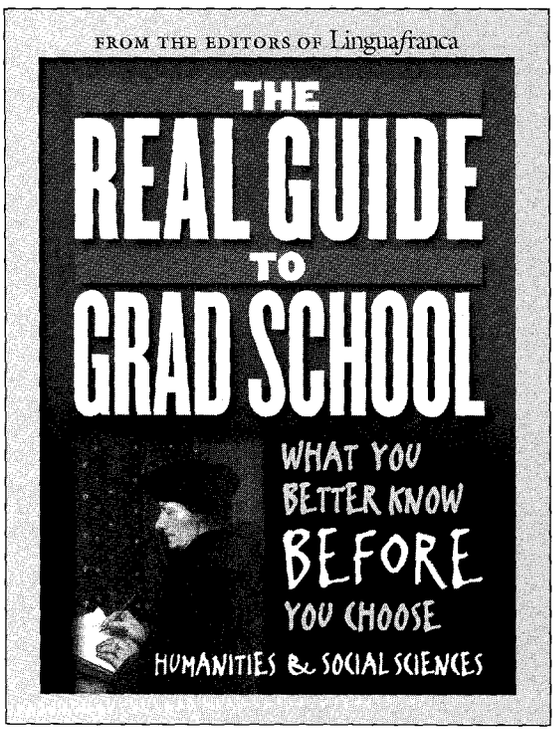

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Dinosaur to Dragon

The predictable bell-curve brontosaurus,
dumb with tons and years, raises its head.
Extinction has come at last. No more swallowing rocks
to grind the endless meal of green needles.
No more subsiding to sleep, a carrion mountain,
under the bowed head of hunger on two legs.
No more need to love the Jurassic.
The little face lifted on the long brown throat
sags, it widens, grows lips and eyelids,
whiskers, fleshy spines, warts and spangles.
New bones, new colors open in its skin,
new toes flex and take hold.
New claws, oh it scratches the itch on its back at last
and the back sprouts feathers, the feathers have feathers,
the feathers on feathers grow feathers; gladly intricate
and hard to see as anything living,
its infinite edges intimate with air,
the dragon unfurls its wings peacock and tangerine
leaves the ground ruby murex indigo
lashes its fractal tail.

SARAH LINDSAY

ference: he chose to compose a lengthy epic. This was a form that Callimachus rejected as beyond salvage. "Big book," he is reported to have said, "big pain." In the prologue to his *Origins*, a collection of short mythological narratives that explain the genesis of contemporary cults and customs, he rebuts critics who scorn his poetry "because I have not completed one long continuous poem ... on kings and heroes ... in many thousands of lines," and later he cites Apollo's advice to him: "Poet, feed the sacrificial victim to fatness, but keep your Muse slender."

Callimachus also wrote an epigram that begins "I loathe the cyclic poem...." The adjective recalls the so-called "cyclic" epics, long poems that rounded out the two Homeric epics by telling the stories of the death of Achilles, the Trojan horse, the death of Odysseus and so on. But it also carries the meaning "vulgar," "common"; and some scholars, rejecting as a later invention the literary quarrel between Callimachus and Apollonius, restrict the word here to this meaning and take Callimachus's remarks about long poems as a general dismissal, with no specific reference to Apollonius. Green disagrees. He cites an epigram attributed to Apollonius (an attribution contested by those who reject the literary quarrel) which has the form, as Green says, "of two mock-encyclopedic entries," and runs, in his perfect translation: "KALLIMACHOS: Trash, cheap joke, blockhead. /Original sin: writing Kallimachos' *Origins*." There is much to be said for Green's view. The form of the epigram may well be a sardonic mimicry of Callimachus's laconic dismissal of the big book, and its first word "trash" recalls Callimachus's lines in his Hymn to Apollo where the god, speaking of long poems, compares them to the Assyrian river that carries on its flood "the dregs of the earth and much rubbish." In any case, this kind of literary bloodletting is exactly what Timon singled out as the principal occupation of the inhabitants of the *Mouseion* in Alexandria.

When Apollonius decided on epic as his medium, he must have been aware of some lines written by an epic poet active some hundred years before his own time, a writer called Choerilus of Samos. "Happy the man expert in song in those days—to be a servant of the Muses when the meadow was still unspoiled. Now that everything has been allotted, and the arts have reached their limits, we are left behind, last in the race; no matter where you look there is no place to drive your new-yoked chariot." His own solution was to abandon the myths and write an epic on the Persian War of 480-479 B.C. It has not survived. Apollonius, by contrast, far from choosing a more recent theme, went back to one of the oldest Greek myths, a story that, he says, had been told "by singers before my time." It was, in fact, already well known when Homer composed his *Odyssey*; it is mentioned there as "common knowledge." His first presentation of his work, which in the ancient world was normally a public reading, was a dismal failure. He left Alexandria for the island of Rhodes, where he worked for many years on a revised version.

Rhodes was an anomaly in the world of the great Hellenistic kingdoms ruled by the descendants of Alexander's generals. It was an independent state that had successfully repulsed an attempt to acquire it by the Hellenistic warlord known as Demetrius the Besieger. It was a maritime republic, with a navy and a large merchant fleet; and it must have been on the docksides of the Rhodian harbors that Apollonius picked up the expert knowledge of seamanship that is so strong a feature of his poem, and also the details of wind and water on the long voyage from Northern Greece through the Hellespont into the Black Sea and along the North coast of Turkey all the way to the river Rhioni in what is now the Republic of Georgia. Many of these navigational details were confirmed by the intrepid Tim Severin, who commissioned a twenty-oared Bronze Age ship, recruited some heroic strong-armed volunteers and made the same trip, to be welcomed at the end of it in what was then the Soviet Republic of Georgia with a banquet, and, as his dinner companion, Medea, "a strikingly beautiful Georgian actress ... dressed in a pure white Greek costume."

But Apollonius's account of the voyage is also rich in incidents that bear no relation to fact, in mythological marvels of all kinds: the Clashing Rocks that crush anything that tries to pass between them; the Harpies, winged female monsters that snatch the food off their victim's plate until they are finally chased away by two of the Argonauts who happen to be equipped with wings; a water nymph that falls in love with young Hylas and drags him down into the water to live with her forever; fire-breathing bulls that Jason has to yoke, and seeds that once sown grow swiftly out of the ground as armed warriors, not to mention the gigantic serpent that guards the Golden Fleece and Medea's magic that protects Jason from the bulls and puts the dragon to

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sleep.

In this respect, Apollonius was defying the literary fashion of his age, which was for allegorizing the supernatural details of the ancestral myths, or rationalizing them by suggesting prosaic origins of which the myths were fanciful accounts. Green cites the prose version of the Argo myth by one Scytobrachion, a contemporary of Apollonius, in which the fire-breathing bulls (*tauroi*) are fierce warriors from Tauris (the Crimea), and the monstrous serpent that guards the Fleece (*drakon*) is a human sentinel called Drakon (which was a Greek proper name). But Apollonius wrote as if he believed the myths. "His narrative," Green writes, "never falls back on rationalization and ... is virtually free of allegory."

Still, although Apollonius's poem is as full of mythical wonders as Homer's *Odyssey*, his men are not creatures from the same heroic mold as Achilles, Odysseus, and their peers. Only one of the original crew, Heracles, is of that stature and temper, and he is left behind early in the voyage, searching in vain for his lost boy love Hylas. The other Argonauts are human (though Zetes and Calais have wings), and Jason is all too human. He has even been described as an "anti-hero."

Early in the voyage, long before reaching Colchis, Jason falls into despair when one of the heroes is killed by a wild boar, and immediately after the funeral Tiphys, the Argo's skilled steersman, dies suddenly of a fast-killing disease. The Argonauts "hopeless and helpless ... lay down on the shore," but it is not Jason their captain who rouses them to action, but two members of the crew: Ankaios, who is also a steersman, and Peleus, son of Aiakos, who points out that there are also other skilled steersmen who could take the helm. Jason "in his shiftlessness made him answer:/ Son of Aiakos, where are these steersman of yours?... For us/ I foresee a fate as grim as awaits the dead.... " But Ankaios presses his claim, and so do others who are experienced seamen. Ankaios is chosen by the crew and they set sail—all this with Jason apparently ignored.

Later still, when Jason, "distraught," tells his shipmates about the ordeals that he has undertaken in order to win the fleece, Peleus, sensing his indecision, tells him bluntly either to go ahead like a hero or, "if your heart places less than absolute reliance/ on your valor, then neither commit yourself, nor sit there/ looking hopefully round at the rest of us...." Peleus, as Green says, "virtually accuses his leader of cowardice." Overtures are made to Medea, and Jason, protected by her magic, wins the Fleece. On the way back, however, he finds his way blocked by superior Colchian forces commanded by Apsyrtos, Medea's older brother. He makes an agreement with him that he will be allowed to keep the Fleece and go on his way on one condition: that Medea, "the real bone of contention," will be put in the keeping of the priestess of Artemis until the royal judges decide whether she is to go on with Jason or be shipped home.

Medea's reaction is a furious outburst that was drawn on by Catullus for his Ariadne, Virgil for his Dido, and Ovid for his Medea and Ariadne. It is a searing denunciation of Jason's cowardice and treachery. She reminds him of his oaths to marry her, of his debt to her for saving his life, of the sacrifices she has made for his sake, and of the grim fate that waits her if she is sent back to Colchis. Jason is quick with the soft answer that turneth away wrath. He claims that the pact was a trap, a trick to lure Apsyrtos to a meeting where he can be "removed."

Was this his intention, or is this the swift reaction of a skillful liar? Apollonius does not spell it out, but Jason's fine-tuned phrases about Apsyrtos—"his ruin ... removed"—suggest that even now he is maneuvering. "The mealy-mouthed diplomat," Green points out, "is a master of euphemism." Medea forces his hand: she will send a personal plea to her brother for a meeting; once get him alone, she says to Jason, and "then"—no euphemism here—"if you relish the job—I couldn't care less,/ kill...." The girl who fell in love at first sight has already, long before the pair return to Iolkos and then move to Corinth, taken the measure of her future husband and shown the temper that will one day exact from him a terrible price for his faithless ingratitude.

But Green has a final balanced word on the hero of this unorthodox epic.

> What are Jason's advantages? Attractiveness to young women. Crisis management. Despite his dependence (like many managers) on the opinion and skills of others, despite his own limited abilities and proneness to fits of helpless despair, Jason in the long run gets the job done, even if by methods that are often unheroic and at least once (the murder of Apsyrtos) both cowardly and criminal. We are seeing the evolution of a society in which the end justifies the means.

A word that occurs frequently in the poem is *amechania*, or being without a *mechane*, a way out, a solution: helplessness. In fact, it is not only a state of mind that affects Jason and Medea in

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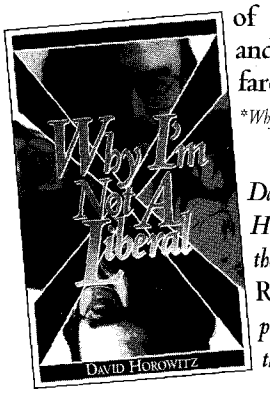
The author of *Radical Son* explains

Why I'm Not A Liberal

"I still believe in the liberation of blacks, minorities, and the poor, but now I believe they must be liberated from the chains of liberalism and the welfare state."*

**Why I'm Not A Liberal*



David Horowitz is the author of Radical Son *published by the Free Press.*

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turn (Medea actually contemplates suicide during the sleepless night she passes trying to decide whether or not to risk everything by helping Jason); it is also, as Green persuasively suggests, the key to Apollonius's view of the human condition, what he calls "that pervasive sense of human uncertainty, shiftlessness and ignorance in the face of an unknown that—despite all the advances of science, despite Euhemerus's scaling-down of the Olympians as mere deified kings or generals—extends from divine motivation to the unpredictability of the future, from magic and other counter-natural powers to the gaping cracks in the fabric of the old heroic ethos."

A poem with a rather modern mood, but also an entrancing story. And for those starting on it for the first time, a word of warning: after the preliminary tale of Jason, the man with one sandal, and Pelias, the usurper who sends him on what he believes is a suicide mission, Apollonius, following the example of the *Iliad*, launches out on a two-hundred-line catalog of the names, the ancestries, and the qualifications of the crew of the Argo. For those readers interested in Apollonius's literary allusions and mythological modifications, or in the genealogies and the interconnections of the fifty-five heroes, Green's detailed commentary and full glossary provides ample resources. Others may find this section rough going, but they should grit their teeth and row on.

Awaiting them is an island populated only by women, ruled over by a beautiful queen called Hypsipyle. They all had husbands once, but the fools spent most of their time in bed with the women they had captured in their wars. Their wives rose up and killed the lot of them, together with their concubines, their own fathers and the male children. And now these Bolshevik proto-feminists have a problem: they are growing older and facing extinction. So they welcome Jason and the Argonauts with more than open arms. From here on, the reader will be swept along on running seas before a fair wind, through a series of strange encounters all the way to Colchis, and then, with Medea and the Golden Fleece aboard, across the Black Sea and home the long way round to complete a voyage such as the one for which Cavafy told us to pray, "full of adventures, full of things to learn."

BERNARD KNOX is the author most recently of *Backing into the Future: The Classical Tradition and its Renewal* (W.W. Norton).

The Penultimate Horror

BY OMER BARTOV

The Order of Terror: The Concentration Camp by Wolfgang Sofsky translated by William Templer

(Princeton University Press, 356 pp., $29.95)

The historiography of the Holocaust has been written almost exclusively in two distinct narratives. The first, to which German historians have made an especially important contribution in recent years, is concerned with the planning, the organization, and the perpetration of genocide. The second, written in large part by Jewish scholars, some of whom specialize in literature rather than history, focuses largely on the victims. And this predilection for telling two different stories about the same event imposes serious limits on our understanding of "The Final Solution."

To be sure, the problem is not unique to this subject. Many nations have tended to tell only their side of the past, ignoring or marginalizing the role and the fate of other groups that influenced or were touched by their history. The traditional historiography of imperialism deprived the peoples whose freedom was taken away by European colonization also of their identity and their history. Similarly, the complicated, sometimes disastrous, but in many cases also fruitful relationship between European Jewry and the Christian population in whose midst it lived for many centuries earned only a few cursory remarks in the national histories that have been an important influence in defining European identities since the nineteenth century.

Historians are always caught between their professional duty to reconstruct the past as accurately as they can, and their personal, national, and ideological motivations. While scholarly integrity depends on presenting all the protagonists of a given historical event, the identity of the individual historian sets limits to his or her interests and sensibilities. Still, most historians would agree by now that telling the tale from the perspective of only one side must distort the picture and hamper the understanding. We may accept that, to some extent, this is inevitable; but we must think it a regrettable consequence of our limitations. In the case of the Holocaust, however, there is little evidence of such regret. Many of the scholars writing on the perpetrators or on the victims tend to justify the persistence of this double narrative. One might even argue that if most scholars of the Holocaust agree on anything, it is on the merits of separating the murderers and the murdered, as well as on the historical and moral perils of combining the two perspectives into a single narrative.

Writing a comprehensive history of the Holocaust that takes into account both the organization of genocide and the manner in which it was experienced by the victims is, of course, an almost impossibly vast undertaking. Merely mastering the tremendous documentation, the ever-growing secondary literature, and the variety of languages in which all this material was written, may well be beyond the capacities of a single scholar. These technical limitations are themselves a measure of the scale of the genocidal ambitions of the Nazis, and the extent to which they were in fact realized.

Consider the case of the fine German historian Dieter Pohl. His recent book on the genocide of the Jews in Eastern Galicia is one of the most important regional studies of the Holocaust in the last few years. Pohl has made extensive use of newly available documents in Poland, the Ukraine and Russia, as well as of East European scholarly literature that was rarely invoked in previous works by Western historians. And yet, although he is concerned with a relatively small region, Pohl admits to having written his study only from the perspective of the perpetrators, expressing the hope that the story of the victims will be written by another historian equipped with the required scholarly and linguistic abilities.

The persistence of this double narrative can be traced also to a jumble of historical assumptions. It has been argued that there is no need to represent the victims in order to explain the planning

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and the implementation of their murder. Similarly, analyses of the victims' experience have often seen no need to dwell on the organization of genocide or the motivations of the perpetrators. And these vexations are not merely methodological. They reflect also an anxiety regarding the moral impact of acknowledging the humanity of both groups by putting them, so to speak, face-to-face with one another—though the reality of genocide made contact between them unavoidable.

German scholars have insisted that since the perpetrators totally dehumanized their victims, no amount of knowledge about the objective reality of the latter will tell us anything of value about the motivations of the former. Moreover, claiming that the perpetrators might have recognized the humanity of those they killed is seen as morally dubious, since it may lead to a humanization of the killers. A similar fear is implicit in the resistance of those concerned with the perspective of the victims. They are reluctant to combine their narrative with that of the murderers, since this might create empathy with individuals whose actions took them beyond the fold of civilization. And there is also the worry that a comprehensive account might lead to highly disturbing assertions about the complicity, in some cases the collaboration, of the victims in the murder itself.

Still, by insisting on this rigid separation of narratives, scholars are paradoxically in danger of accepting the dehumanization that was at the very heart of the genocide. This is not to say that the perpetrators often saw their victims as fellow human beings, though some such cases have been documented, nor that the victims were in a position to view their murderers as anything but the embodiment of evil. But it is precisely the process of dehumanization that we need to understand, and this cannot be achieved without analyzing the relationship between the two groups, however profoundly disturbing this may be for our perception of our own humanity.

Wolfgang Sofsky's pathbreaking study is one of the first systematic attempts to break out of these paradigms, and to provide a comprehensive interpretation of the "concentrationary universe." It is a remarkable book, filled with important ideas, based on a mass of published documents, memoirs, and secondary works. It is quite unrelenting in its determination to penetrate the reality and the logic of the concentration camp system by focusing on the relationship between and among the perpetrators and the victims. What Sofsky tells us about human behavior in extreme situations is profoundly disturbing, and his book should be read by anyone who wishes to gain a deeper understanding not only of Nazi terror, but also of the dark potential of modern society. And yet Sofsky has written a highly problematic book, whose unified narrative is structured around an evasion, even a dismissal, of National Socialism's most fundamental characteristics: its ideological underpinnings and its genocidal dynamics.

For several decades now, the historiography of the Holocaust has been divided between the "intentionalist" school, which posited the importance of Nazi ideology and the long-held intention to murder the Jews, and the "functionalist" school, which emphasized structural factors and the pressure of circumstances and (self-imposed) constraints as the main cause of "The Final Solution." Sofsky shows little interest in either of these interpretations, though the main thesis of his book seems to echo some "functionalist" arguments. A sociologist, Sofsky focuses on the structures and the functions of the Nazi concentration camp system, which he sees as increasingly isolated from the rest of society, and only marginally influenced by the ideology of the regime.

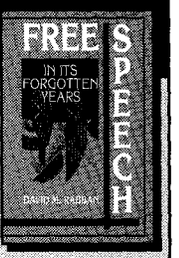
The concentration camp, he argues, was a place in which absolute power was given to a group of people whose growing separation from their environment, and whose gradual independence from the center, meant that their actions were primarily governed by an awareness of the unlimited power that they held, by their ability to exercise terror against their victims without any outside control. At the same time, the closed society of the camp made for the appearance of a unique relationship between the perpetrators and the victims, and within each of these groups, whereby the perpetrators depended on the complicity of some victims to maintain their control, while the victims could hope to survive only through some collaboration with their potential murderers.

Sofsky's description of the camp leaves very little room for comradeship and solidarity among the inmates. Indeed, while he never loses sight of the difference between the guards and the prisoners, Sofsky shows how the interaction between the different "classes" of inmates facilitated the effective operation of the system as a whole, despite the small numbers of S.S. men on the ground.

> This was not a *Leidensgemeinschaft*—there was no community of suffering here. The laws of the jungle prevailed in the daily

Free Speech in Its Forgotten Years, 1870-1920

David M. Rabban



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struggle for survival.... Frequently, the only way to survive was at the expense of others. One prisoner's death was another's bread.... Solidarity is based on the principle of mutual aid and sharing. But where there is nothing to share, except at the cost of common destruction and doom, solidarity lacks a material basis.... Absolute power is based on a cleverly devised system of classification and collaboration, gradation of power, and privilege.... [It] thrusts individuals into a condition where what is ultimately decisive is the right of the stronger.

At the top of the hierarchy of prisoners were the "greens" and the "reds," that is, the criminals, who were mostly German, and the "politicals," who were mostly communist. These two groups vied for control of the rest of the camp population, in which Jews, Gypsies, Poles and Russians were at the bottom. Even in the case of these "lower" categories, once the "aristocracy" of communists or criminals was weak or absent, it was the Poles and the Russians who came to control the lowest of the low, of whom the Jews were the vast majority. Homosexuals also ranked quite low in the hierarchy, though they could improve their conditions by having sex with the upper echelons of the male population or with women. Inmates imprisoned for their religious convictions, including Jehovah's Witnesses, were initially treated very badly; but later on, due to their obedience in all matters not touching directly on their faith, as well as to their "Aryan" status, their situation greatly improved.

Where solidarity existed, as in the case of the communists, it was employed to save other comrades from punishment and death by manipulating the lists. This had the inevitable consequence that other inmates were killed instead. In order to "maintain themselves over the longer term," Sofsky writes, "the prisoner-functionaries had to give preferential treatment to the group that supported them, while excluding the others from support." To be sure, the final arbiter was always the S.S., and all inmates were in danger of being murdered by the guards at any given moment. The Kapos and the block leaders also killed inmates in order to demonstrate their power and status. Indeed, the S.S. was dependent on the prisoner hierarchy for control of the camp, just as those prisoners fortunate enough to gain a position of power knew that their status spelled the difference between life and death: extra food, better clothes and quarters, less work and more rest. Sofsky's book powerfully demonstrates that absolute power produces atrocity, that absolute power is an essential condition for the mental and physical destruction of human beings, by creating perpetrators for whom atrocity is normality, and murder merely part of a day's routine, punctuated by lunch breaks and social activities.

Sofsky does not deny that this condition of omnipresent murder attracts and breeds sadists, and he furnishes some hair-raising examples. In Sachsenhausen, Jews were drowned in the latrine, and others were killed by attaching water hoses to their mouths; in Dachau, prisoners were locked in "dog cells" too small to either stand or sit in; in Buchenwald, prisoners' legs were torn asunder by hanging them from doors, and their genitals were burned, frozen, and crushed. Thousands of inmates were "bathed to death" in ice-cold water. Prisoners were suspended from poles by their arms after they had been tied behind their backs, mauled by dogs, thrown into quarries, pushed into swamps, buried and burned alive.

But what is even more terrifying in Sofsky's account is the normality of both the murder and the complicity of those who could thereby postpone their own death by a few weeks, days, or hours. Hence his insistence that "moral depravity and sadistic brutalization" apart, "the violence of the aristocracy had a clear social meaning ... It documented the prerogative they enjoyed to beat, torment, and kill ... By means of brutality, many prisoner-functionaries demonstrated that they were still alive, while so many others were not."

Sofsky also dispels the notion that the concentration camp was a site of order and rules, clearly defined goals and an efficient bureaucracy. He argues instead that the very essence of absolute terror is its combination of endlessly elaborate rules and regulations with perpetual chaos and improvisation. In the concentrationary universe, no one knew what would happen next. What had saved an inmate from death on one occasion could prove to be his or her undoing the next day.

Sofsky's focus on the camp as an institution enables him to pay close attention to all major components of that infernal world. He notes how the inmates' perception of time and space was transformed into an eternal here and now, in which any memory of the past or thought of the future could spell disintegration and extinction. He analyzes work in the camps, which he rightly distinguishes from slavery by stressing that its ultimate aim was always the murder of the prisoners, even if they were at times expected to benefit the economy of the Reich or to satisfy the greed of their guards on their way to annihilation. And he examines the ubiquitous violence and death that was the single most characteristic feature of the camps.

And yet this book is seriously flawed. Indeed, it raises fundamental questions about the use and abuse of grand explanations and abstract categories, and about the role of ideology, theory, and identity in perpetrating and interpreting evil. Sofsky's analysis of the concentration camp as an institution enables him to categorize it as a typical product of modern civilization, structurally and organizationally related to other modern institutions such as military barracks, prisons, insane asylums, and so forth, but radically different from them in that its sole function was the destruction of humanity. By insisting on this model, however, Sofsky obscures some of the most distinct features of the Nazi system, and fails to clarify what made it different from other totalitarian regimes in our century.

Sofsky's way of regarding absolute terror leaves unexplained the genocidal enterprise of the Nazis against the Jews. He shows convincingly that the combination of chaos and power created the terror that was the main characteristic of the camps. But when he finally arrives at the "Final Solution" in the very last chapter of his book, significantly entitled "The Death Factory," it becomes clear that his analysis is insufficient to explain the radically different, wholly murderous logic of what the Nazis called the "extermination of the Jews."

Sofsky is not alone in finding a great deal of improvisation in this attempt to murder an entire people. And yet the Nazi policy was ruled by one simple principle, understood and accepted by all those involved in this enterprise: each and every Jew, man, woman and child, was to be killed. This principle did not apply to any other category of people tortured and often murdered by the Nazis. The regime encountered a great deal of opposition to the euthanasia of the physically and mentally handicapped; and though it was secretly continued, the Nazis also resorted to other measures such as sterilization. German communists, being "Aryan," could in many cases be "re-educated" and returned to the fold. Homosexuals were not consistently persecuted, and could improve their treatment by demonstrating heterosexual behavior. Even the majority of Poles and Russians, although they were categorized as *Untermenschen* were to be enslaved rather than killed. And, as Michael Zimmermann has demonstrated in his new study on the Gypsies, debates about the "racial com-

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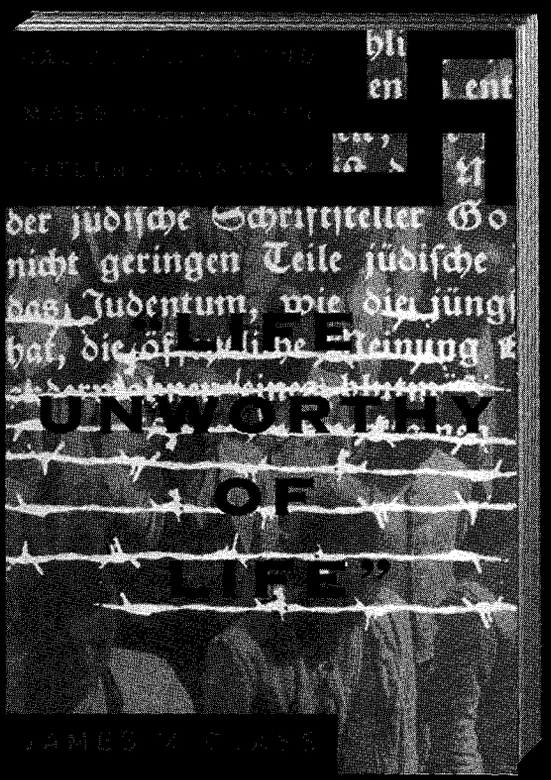

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position" of the Sinti and Roma (who were considered to have once been "pure Aryans") limited the extent to which they were pursued and murdered by the Nazis, and made for a rather haphazard policy of persecution.

It was *only* in the case of the Jews that there was a determination to seek out every baby hidden in a haystack, every family living in a bunker in the forest, every woman trying to pass herself off as a Gentile. It was *only* in the case of the Jews that vast factories were constructed and managed with the sole purpose of killing trainload after trainload of people. It was *only* in the case of the Jews that huge, open-air, public massacres of tens of thousands of people were conducted on a daily basis throughout Eastern Europe.

Paradoxically, Sofsky's last chapter, itself an acute analysis of the death camps, causes his own thesis to collapse. Treblinka and Sobibor, Chelmno and Belzec have little in common, as he points out, with the typical concentration camp, to whose analysis the main bulk of his book is devoted. Only Birkenau bears some resemblance to those other camps, since it served both as a death camp and as a concentration camp. But in this case, too, the camp did not exist as such for the vast majority of the Jews transported there in the latter stages of the extermination, since they were immediately selected for the gas chambers and turned into ashes within hours of their arrival.

For Sofsky's argument to hold—namely, that the concentration camp was the most typical and unique feature of the Nazi regime—he needs to show at a minimum that the death camp was a natural outgrowth of the concentration camp system, that the incarceration of real or imaginary political opponents, "asocials," criminals, and "deviants," all of whom were individual adults and none of whom were imprisoned along with their families, had something in common with the genocide of the Jews. He needs to show, indeed, that the one thing led to the other. And this is precisely what he cannot show.

Such an argument was made in the early years of scholarship on the Nazi regime, but it has meanwhile become increasingly contested, since we now know that the death camps were constructed merely as a more efficient way of killing Jews following the technical and psychological problems encountered in mass open-air killings during the first phase of the Holocaust, and in view of the fact that those who organized the death camps came from the administration of the T-4 operation, that is, the "euthanasia" campaign, rather than from the concentration camps. In any case, Sofsky does not even attempt to substantiate his implied assumption that "The Final Solution" was an outgrowth of the concentration camp. And so his harrowing last chapter seems tacked on to the rest of his book, almost as an afterthought, unwittingly betraying his recognition that something was lacking in his analysis all along.

These problems and the inconsistencies in Sofsky's half-hearted distinctions between categories of camps and victims (until his last chapter, the Jews are usually placed on the same level as Poles and Russians) are especially egregious in a study whose most important contribution is its penchant for categorization. But this brings us to another problem, which is Sofsky's persistent use of abstract categories, especially his term "absolute power." Reading his book, one begins to feel that "absolute power" has a life of its own, independent of any person's will, ideology, passions and prejudices; that it is itself an external force that rules over everyone's fate, perpetrator and victim alike, and that there is no escaping it. The effect is completely ahistorical.

Focusing on the closed environment of the concentration camp, Sofsky dismisses the impact on the perpetrators of ideological training and traditional prejudices, of loyalty to a regime and hatred of real or imagined enemies. He argues that "to link what was actually happening inside the system—the motivational structure propelling the perpetrators and the dynamics of excessive power—to *ideology* is unconvincing." For absolute power, ideology "is not just superfluous, but obstructive." Indeed, "to take recourse in ideology is a false interpretation *post festum*, nourished by the mistaken belief that there always has to be an intellectual reason, that everything has some historical meaning." Consequently, Sofsky asserts that "to attempt to derive the brutality of the associates of the S.S. from the images of the enemy propagated by regime propaganda would be naïve: it would mean being taken in by the ideology of the system," whereas in fact "absolute power has no enemies that could endanger it."

Sofsky has no interest in history and biography, in individual recollection and collective memory. His protagonists are weirdly faceless, lacking a past and a future, an identity and a name. They function as they do because of the system into which they have been thrown, because of the status that has been allotted them, because nothing they might do could conceivably change the reality of their present condition. In that sense, everyone is caught in the eternal present that Sofsky calls "camp time," where the past is irrelevant and the future cannot be anticipated. Most disturbing, perhaps, is the fact that the prisoners appear in his study as abstract entities, as "reds," "greens," "Jews": they are assigned precisely the identities that were imposed upon them by the perpetrators, and denied any unique human features.

To some extent this reflects the nature of Sofsky's book, a sociological study whose insistence on making distinctions forces it into a framework that leaves no room for personal choice and personal identity. But finally this gives his study a strangely apologetic tone. While a similar order of terror was constructed by other regimes in this century, Sofsky insists on the unique features of the Nazi case—but he desists from discussing the political, ideological, and historical origins of Nazism, presents the camp as a site for the destruction of an undifferentiated mass of human beings (however complex their social organization), and fails to discuss systematically the concrete case of the Jewish genocide. In this way, Sofsky ends up by dissociating the order of terror from anything particularly German. Despite his last-minute effort to correct this impression, he tends to associate the fate of the Jews with that of all other victims of the regime.

From this perspective, *The Order of Terror* is not really about the Holocaust at all. The "ideal" concentration camp constructed by Sofsky is modeled on such camps as Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen, Mauthausen, and Dachau. Those were horrific institutions in which thousands of men and women were tortured and murdered. Some of them were Jews, but most belonged to the other categories of human beings persecuted by the Nazis, the majority of whom were considered political opponents. Only toward the end of the war did those camps change their identity, as the collapse of the front forced the Nazis to dismantle the camps associated with the "Final Solution" in the east and send their inmates on death marches to the west. The survivors of the death marches crowded the camps in Germany, transforming them into sites of mass dying; and even then, it should be noted, the "politicals" were kept apart from the Jews and lived in relatively better conditions.

During most of the Third Reich, however, the older camps in Germany and Austria differed substantially from the

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concentration camps, the ghettos, and especially the death camps in the east. The main difference was that in the east the camp system served primarily one goal: the killing of Jews. That the Jews were perceived and treated by the Nazis as essentially different from all their other "enemies" is certainly implied in Sofsky's description of them as being the lowest of the low in the camp hierarchy, as constituting the vast majority of the *Muselmänner*, the walking dead of the camps, who could never gain any position of privilege or power. But even these adult and mostly male Jewish prisoners were not typical of the fate of Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe, the vast majority of whom, men, women and children, died in the ghettos, or were shot in mass executions, or were sent to the death camps. And this enormous genocidal structure constructed by the Nazis has only an incidental role in Sofsky's analysis, for the simple reason that his book is about the system of terror against everyone but the Jews.

Sofsky seems to believe that he has given us a definitive interpretation of the entire Nazi system. He is mistaken. His "order of terror" explains a great deal about one of the most terrifying institutions of the Nazi regime, and it trenchantly reveals the extent to which it was the product of social structures and conceptions of humanity that are still with us today; but it tells us very little about the genocide of the Jews. Sofsky scants the link between ideology and action, and in the German case between National Socialism and the system of terror it constructed against (but also with the collaboration of) masses of Germans and non-Germans alike; and the link between the camps and the more comprehensive phenomenon of genocide, between the Nazi "concentrationary universe" and the singular event of the mass murder of an entire people. The camps that Sofsky describes may be compared with the Soviet gulag, with the Chinese, Cambodian, and other camp systems in which our century has been so rich. The Nazi concentration camps were about as bad as some of their predecessors and their successors; but the horror of genocide stands apart from all of them. It is this horror, the very worst horror that humanity has yet devised, that Sofsky has neither explained nor dispelled.

OMER BARTOV is professor of history at Rutgers University, and the author most recently of *Murder in Our Midst: The Holocaust, Industrial Killing, and Representation* (Oxford University Press).

TRB *continued from page 4*

tion in the U.N. banning the export of APMs. More importantly, the U.S. has also established a Demining Assistance Program to provide training, equipment, and funds for clearing mines and for teaching the local populace in countries such as Nicaragua, Afghanistan, and Eritrea how to avoid them. The U.S. has pledged several million dollars in aid to Cambodia for demining. And on May 16, 1996, President Clinton ordered American forces stationed everywhere but South Korea to discontinue the use, except for training purposes, of so-called "dumb mines"—those that do not deactivate themselves after a certain pre-set period. He also ordered the destruction of the remaining U.S. inventory of 4 million dumb mines by 1999.

Those opposed to land mines still aren't satisfied. Now that the cold war has ended, they say, the U.S. has an obligation to ban land mines categorically. But as the case of Korea demonstrates, the cold war is not quite over everywhere. The intentions of the North Koreans are impossible to decipher, but a massive push to overrun Seoul cannot be ruled out. U.S. troops are already in a highly vulnerable position, since they are based so close to the 38th Parallel. The millions of mines that have been laid by the U.S. and South Korea form a critical line of defense, which would slow a North Korean advance and divert invaders into areas vulnerable to air assault. The refusal of the nations gathered in Oslo to concede this to the U.S. was just another sign of the air of unreality that hangs over this crusade.

But land mines don't just play a useful role for the U.S. In Bosnia, despite the carnage land mines continue to wreak on civilians, they helped Sarajevo deter Serb ground forces. And China and Russia, which also refused to sign the Ottawa treaty, rely on land mines to protect their extended borders. As a sea power, it's easy enough for the U.S. to dispense with land mines on its own territory—not even Pat Buchanan has called for installing them on the border with Mexico—but there is no chance that either Beijing or Moscow would contemplate abolishing them. Indeed, both countries also earn a tidy profit from their exports of a variety of land mines to Third World countries.

Land mines are bad. They may even be uniquely odious. But by encouraging potential aggressors such as North Korea, the Ottawa treaty would aggravate the very problems it purports to solve. In the end, it would do more than perpetuate the politics of sentiment. It would be self-destructive.

JACOB HEILBRUNN

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AMMAN DIARIST

King of peace

MADELEINE ALBRIGHT HAS COME and gone. While in the neighborhood, she met mostly with the recalcitrants in the peace process—including Hafez al-Assad of Syria, who so disturbed the sleep of her predecessor, Warren Christopher. But her entourage obeyed the rules instituted by Nancy Kissinger in the old days of shuttle diplomacy: never stay in Damascus overnight and do not eat there either. With the very difficult men of this region, Albright was essentially engaging in cajolery, that seamless mix of threat and enticement that is the modus operandi of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. She also visited Beirut, as Christopher himself did four years ago. There were no real transactions on her Lebanon agenda, only the pep rally pretense that the country is actually independent rather than a satrapy of Syria—what the Lebanese scholar Habib Malir has called a "phantom participant" in its own political destiny.

BY THE TIME THE SECRETARY arrived here to see King Hussein, she had already met with Yasir Arafat, who specializes in making promises he does not intend to keep and in demanding tribute no one will pay. Still, Albright did assure Arafat that, though Congress has continued to block American cash payments to his Palestinian Authority, she will do her best to make sure he gets the money. And she will do so even though his own proto-parliament has reported that roughly half of the Palestinian budget has either gone to waste or been skimmed. Despite her solicitude for Arafat, however, it's no secret that the Secretary of State thinks him a lunatic, shouting at her with one breath and whining in the next.

WHAT A RELIEF IT MUST HAVE BEEN to sit with the King. Dignified, honest, and brave, he is also exquisitely courteous, a man who addresses all of his male guests as "sir," and women as "madam," as he did with Albright. He is, moreover, not a recalcitrant about peace with Israel. The King probably has a firmer understanding of the Middle East protagonists' minimum conditions for settlement than any of the other local players. He has certainly made it clear that further Israeli concessions must be premised on tougher Palestinian efforts against terrorism. And he also understands that even the most moderate Palestinians are offended (and paralyzed) by the pesky swagger of the Israeli right. Let's face it: no Arab leader has taken greater personal and political risks for peace than the King. The Palestinians who comprise roughly half of the Jordanian populace are not exactly enthusiasts of the peace process he has pioneered. And neither are the roughly one-fifth of the electorate who voted for Islamist candidates in the last elections. So his have been big risks. One would think Albright might have showed that she appreciates his predicament—and his courage. But when asked during a press conference with Hussein about U.S. aid to Jordan, she offered only cramped phrases about budgetary constraints.

THIS WAS RECKLESS. The kingdom is the one country in the Arab world to have truly embraced the peace with Israel. And, while its debts to the U.S. have been canceled or rescheduled, the benefits of peace have not exactly materialized. It would not take much to make a large difference in Jordan, a small country with sparse natural resources. But it does have enemies. Not so long ago Syria sent tanks to its border with the kingdom, and it sponsors low-level terror and sabotage. Saddam Hussein's Iraq might one day move to invade Jordan, just to put its troops in a dramatic confrontation with Israel across the Jordan River. So Jordan needs a credible defense. Much money has been invested domestically in elementary and higher education. Experts say Jordan needs an infusion of $250 million a year—up from $100 million—for the next five years in order to stage an economic take-off. The Jordanians are not a backward people, and this would be a reward they would see. It would immunize them against the widespread restiveness of the Arab street. In fact, it's not that there's great resistance in Congress to helping the Hashemites. There isn't any. A little bit of leadership from the White House and the State Department could easily persuade the House and the Senate.

STILL, IT'S NOT AS IF THE KING PRESIDES over a popular consensus for peace with Israel. The point is that, unlike Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, who receives $2.1 billion a year from the U.S., the King does not ally himself with his country's elites in enmity to the peace. He is, like Sadat before Mubarak, peace's biggest booster. The King's government chafed at Shimon Peres, whom they regarded as gulled by Arafat to the detriment of Jordan. Of course, the King's associates are exasperated with the Netanyahu government, too. He had dawdled for months on several crucial and concrete bilateral issues between Israel and Jordan. Then, suddenly, Ariel Sharon became minister of infrastructure and—would you believe it?—cut a deal with Jordan over water resources. And the long-delayed construction on a new airport at the Jordanian city of Aqaba, which will serve the tourist industries of both countries, will begin soon. What Yitzhak Rabin and the King talked about three years ago at their peace treaty signing has now actually come to pass.

AHMED DAQAMSEH IS the 26-year-old soldier who murdered seven young Israeli girls visiting a peace park in Jordan last March. He has now been sentenced to life in prison. Leading lawyers competed and then cooperated to mount his defense. And the killer is now a popular hero. Songs are written about him and sung widely. Flowers are left at his jail. There is a struggle being waged in, and for, the Arab soul and it is a struggle between the King and Daqamseh. And, alas, we do not really know on which side Yasir Arafat stands in this historic and bitter encounter.

THE KING'S GRANDFATHER ABDULlah gave his life in an effort to come to terms with real history as it was unfolding in the Middle East, to prevent such dark episodes as Daqamseh's bloodletting. The King's grand-uncle, the Emir Feisal, had negotiated with the Zionists as early as eighty years ago in the same spirit. The Hashemites, who have done their war-making with the other Arabs and with the Jews, had in the end linked their destiny to peace. Last week I met Prince Ghazi bin Muhamed, a nephew of the King and younger brother of the wise and candid young Prince Talal, national security adviser to Hussein. Soft-spoken, a graduate of Princeton with a degree in comparative literature and classics, Ghazi now heads a project to restore Christian and Jewish and, of course, Muslim religious sites in Jordan. Jordan already has much to attract visitors—the dazzling Nabotean city of Petra, the splendid Roman remains at Jarash, the ancient amphitheater and citadel in Amman which was once called Philadelphia. But Ghazi's effort to bring religious pilgrims to his country is not just a venture in tourism. It is an assertion of his family's conviction that peace will reign. *Insh'allah.*

MARTIN PERET

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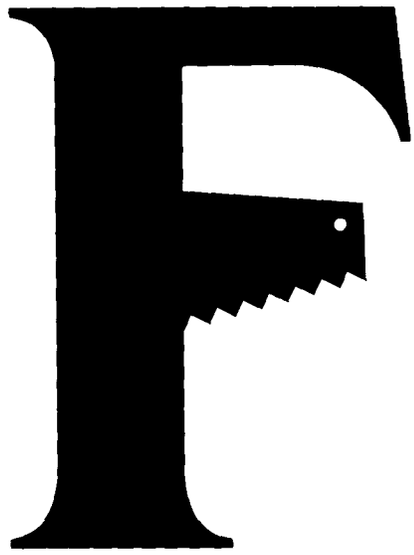

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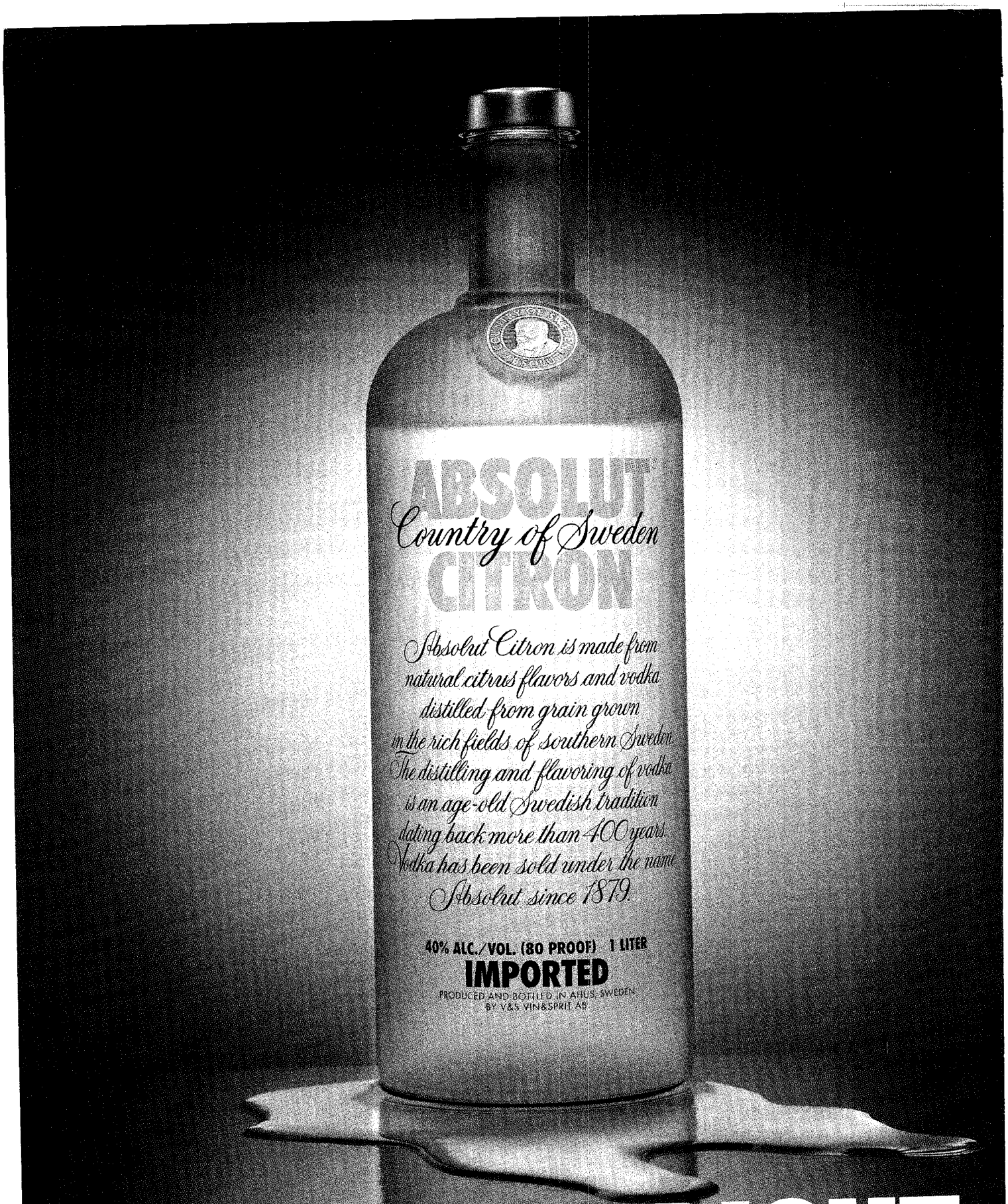
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